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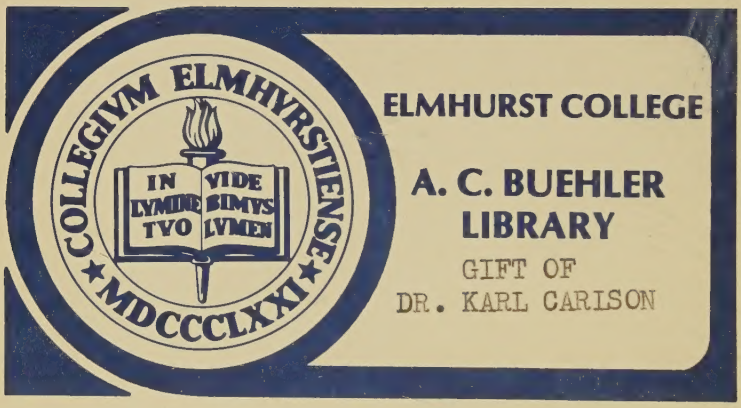
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PAVANNES AND DIVISIONS

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EZRA POUND

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PAVANNES AND DIVISIONS

EZRA POUND

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TO
JOHN QUINN

124863

Certain of these sketches and essays have appeared in "Poetry," "The Fortnightly Review," "The New Age," "The Quarterly Review," "The Future," "The Egoist," and "The Little Review," to the editors of which periodicals the author wishes to make due acknowledgment.

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PAVANNES

PAVANNES

1.

JODINDRANATH MAWHWOR'S OCCUPATION

The soul of Jodindranath Mawhwor clove to the god of this universe and he meditated the law of the Shastras.

He was a man of moderate income inherited for the most part from his fathers, of whom there were several, slightly augmented by his own rather desultory operations of commerce. He had never made money by conquest and was inclined to regard this method of acquisition as antiquated; as belonging rather to the days of his favorite author than to our own.

He had followed the advice of the Sutras, had become the head of an house in the not unprosperous city of Migdalb, in a quarter where dwelt a reasonable proportion of fairly honest and honourable people not unaverse to gossip and visits. His house was situated by a watercourse, in lieu of new fangled plumbing, and in this his custom was at one with that of the earliest Celts. It was divided in various chambers for various occupations, surrounded by a commodious garden, and possessed of the two chief chambers, the "exterior" and the "interior" (*butt* and *ben*). The interior was the place for his women, the exterior enhanced with rich perfumes, contained a bed, soft, luscious, and agreeable to the action of vision, covered with a cloth of unrivalled whiteness. It was a little humped in the middle, and

surmounted with garlands and bundles of flowers, which were sometimes renewed in the morning. Upon it were also a coverlet brightly embroidered and two cylindrical pillows, one at the head and the other placed at the foot. There was also a sort of sofa or bed for repose, at the head of which stood a case for unguents, and perfumes to be used during the night, and a stand for flowers and pots of cosmetic and other odoriferous substances, essences for perfuming the breath, new cut slices of lemon peel and such things as were fitting. On the floor near the sofa rested a metal spittoon, and a toilet case, and above it was a luth suspended from an elephant's tusk, uncut but banded with silver. There was also a drawing table, a bowl of perfume, a few books, and a garland of amaranths. Further off was a sort of round chair or tabouret, a chest containing a chess board, and a low table for dicing. In the outer apartment were cages for Jodindranath's birds. He had a great many too many. There were separate small rooms for spinning, and one for carving in wood and such like dilettantismes. In the garden was a sort of merry-go-round of good rope, looking more or less like a May-pole. There was likewise a common see-saw or teeter, a green house, a sort of rock garden, and two not too comfortable benches.

2.

Jodindranath rose in the morning and brushed his teeth, after having performed other unavoidable duties as prescribed in the sutra, and he applied to his body a not excessive, as he considered it, amount of unguents and perfumes. He then blackened his eyebrows, drew faint lines under his eyes, put a fair deal of rouge on his lips, and regarded himself in a mirror. Then having chewed a few betel leaves to perfume his breath, and

munched another bonne-bouche of perfume, he set about his day's business. He was a creature of habit. That is to say, he bathed, daily. And upon alternate days he anointed his person with oil, and on the third day he lamented that the mossy substance employed by the earliest orthodox hindoos was no longer obtainable. He had never been brought to regard soap with complaisance. His conscience was troubled, both as to the religious and social bearing of this solidified grease. He suspected the presence of beef-suet; it was at best a parvenu and Mohametan substance. Every four days he shaved, that is to say, he shaved his head and his visage, every five or ten days he shaved all the rest of his body. He meticulously removed the sweat from his arm-pits. He ate three meals daily; in the morning, afternoon and at evening as is prescribed in the Charayana.

Immediately after breakfast he spent some time instructing his parrots in language. He then proceeded to cock-fights, quail-fights and ram-fights; from them to the classical plays, though their representations have sadly diminished. He slept some hours at mid-day. Then, as is befitting to the head of an house, he had himself arrayed in his ornaments and habiliment and passed the afternoon in talk with his friends and acquaintance. The evening was given over to singing. Toward the end of it Jodindranath, as the head of his house, retaining only one friend in his company, sat waiting in the aforementioned perfumed and well arranged chamber. As the lady with whom he was at that time connected did not arrive on the instant, he considered sending a messenger to reproach her. The atmosphere grew uneasy. His friend Mohon fidgeted slightly.

Then the lady arrived. Mohon, his friend, rose gra-

ciously, bidding her welcome, spoke a few pleasant words and retired. Jodindranath remained. And for that day, the twenty fifth of August, 1916, this was his last occupation. In this respect the day resembled all others.

This sort of thing has gone on for thirty five hundred years and there have been no disastrous consequences.

3.

As to Jodindranath's thoughts and acts after Mohon had left him, I can speak with no definite certainty. I know that my friend was deeply religious; that he modeled his life on the Shastras and somewhat on the Sutra. To the Kama Sutra he had given minute attention. He was firmly convinced that one should not take one's pleasure with a woman who was a lunatic, or leprous, or too white, or too black, or who gave forth an unpleasant odor, or who lived an ascetic life, or whose husband was a man given to wrath and possessed of inordinate power. These points were to him a matter of grave religion.

He considered that his friends should be constant and that they should assist his designs.

He considered it fitting that a citizen should enter into relations with laundrymen, barbers, cowmen, florists, druggists, merchants of betel leaves, cab-drivers, and with the wives of all these.

He had carefully considered the sizes and shapes and ancient categories of women; to wit, those which should be classified as she-dog, she-horse, and she-elephant, according to their cubic volume. He agreed with the classic author who recommends men to choose women about their own size.

The doctrine that love results either from continuous habit, from imagination, from faith, or from the percep-

tion of exterior objects, or from a mixture of some or all of these causes, gave him no difficulty. He accepted the old authors freely.

We have left him with Lalunmokish seated upon the bed humped in the middle. I can but add that he had carefully considered the definitions laid down in the Sutra; kiss nominal, kiss palpitant, kiss contactic, the kiss of one lip and of two lips (preferring the latter), the kiss transferred, the kiss showing intention. Beyond this he had studied the various methods of scratching and tickling, and the nail pressures as follows: sonorous, half moon and circle, peacock-claw, and blue-lotus.

He considered that the Sutra was too vague when it described the Bengali women, saying that they have large nails, and that the southern women have small nails, which may serve in divers manners for giving pleasure but give less grace to the hand. Biting he did not much approve. Nor was he very greatly impressed with the literary tastes of the public women in Paraliputra. He read books, but not a great many. He preferred conversation which did not leave the main groove. He did not mind its being familiar.

(For myself I can only profess the deepest respect for the women of Paraliputra, who have ever been the friends of brahmins and of students and who have greatly supported the arts.)

4.

Upon the day following, as Jodindranath was retiring for his mid-day repose, his son entered the perfumed apartment. Jodindra closed the book he had been reading. The boy was about twelve years of age. Jodindra began to instruct him, but without indicating

what remarks were his own and what derived from ancient authority. He said:—

"Flower of my life, lotus bud of the parent stem, you must preserve our line and keep fat our ancestral spirits lest they be found withered like bats, as is said in the Mahabhárata. And for this purpose you will doubtless marry a virgin of your own caste and acquire a legal posterity and a good reputation. Still, usage of women is not for one purpose only. For what purpose is the usage of women?"

"The use of women," answered the boy, "is for generation and pleasure."

"There is also a third use," said his father, "yet with certain women you must not mingle. Who are the prohibited women?"

The boy answered, "We should not practise dalliance with the women of higher caste, or with those whom another has had for his pleasure, even though they are of our own caste. But the practise of dalliance with women of lower caste, and with women expelled from their own caste, and with public women, and with women who have been twice married is neither commanded us nor forbidden."

"With such women," said Jodindranath, "dalliance has no object save pleasure. But there are seasons in life when one should think broadly. There are circumstances when you should not merely parrot a text or think only as you have been told by your tutor. As in dalliance itself there is no text to be followed verbatim, for a man should trust in part to the whim of the moment and not govern himself wholly by rules, so in making your career and position, you should think of more things than generation and pleasure.

"You need not say merely: 'The woman is willing'

or 'She has been two times married, what harm can there be in this business?' These are mere thoughts of the senses, impractical fancies. But you have your life before you, and perchance a time will come when you may say, 'This woman has gained the heart of a very great husband, and rules him, and he is a friend of my enemy, if I can gain favor with her, she will persuade him to give up my enemy.' My son, you must manage your rudder. And again, if her husband have some evil design against you, she may divert him, or again you may say, 'If I gain her favor I may then make an end of her husband and we shall have all his great riches.' Or if you should fall into misfortune and say, 'A liaison with this woman is in no way beset with danger, she will bring me a very large treasure, of which I am greatly in need considering my pestilent poverty and my inability to make a good living.'

"Or again: 'This woman knows my weak points, and if I refuse her she will blab them abroad and tarnish my reputation. And she will set her husband against me.'

"Or again: 'This woman's husband has violated my women, I will give him his own with good interest.'

"Or again: 'With this woman's aid I may kill the enemy of the Rajah, whom I have been ordered to kill, and she hides him.'

"Or again: 'The woman I love is under this female's influence, I will use one as the road to the other.'

"Or: 'This woman will get me a rich wife whom I cannot get at without her.' No, my Blue Lotus, life is a serious matter. You will not always have me to guide you. You must think of practical matters. Under such circumstances you should ally yourself with such women."

Thus spoke Jodindra; but the counsel is very ancient and is mostly to be found in the Sutras. These books have been thought very holy. They contain chapters on pillules and philtres.

When Jodindranath had finished this speech he sank back upon one of the cylindrical cushions. In a few moments his head bowed in slumber. This was the day for oil. The next day he shaved his whole body. His life is not unduly ruffled.

Upon another day Jodindranath said to his son, "There are certain low women, people of ill repute, addicted to avarice. You should not converse with them at the street corners, lest your creditors see you."

His son's life was not unduly ruffled.

AN ANACHRONISM AT CHINON

BEHIND *them rose the hill with its grey octagonal castle, to the west a street with good houses, gardens occasionally enclosed and well to do, before them the slightly crooked lane, old worm-eaten fronts low and uneven, booths with their glass front-frames open, slid aside or hung back, the flaccid bottle-green of the panes reflecting odd lights from the provender and cheap crockery; a few peasant women with baskets of eggs and of fowls, while just before them an old peasant with one hen in his basket alternately stroked its head and then smacked it to make it go down under the strings.*

The couple leaned upon one of the tin tables in the moderately clear space by the inn, the elder, grey, with thick hair, square of forehead, square bearded, yet with a face showing curiously long and oval in spite of this quadrature; in the eyes a sort of friendly, companionable melancholy, now intent, now with a certain blankness, like that of a child cruelly interrupted, or of an old man surprised and self-conscious in some act too young for his years, the head from the neck to the crown in contrast almost brutally with the girth and great belly: the head of Don Quixote, and the corpus of Sancho Panza, animality mounting into the lines of the throat and lending energy to the intellect.

His companion obviously an American student.

Student: I came here in hopes of this meeting yet, since you are here at all, you must have changed many opinions.

The Elder: Some. Which do you mean?

Student: Since you are here, personal and persisting?

Rabelais: All that I believed or believe you will find in *De Senectute:* ". . . that being so active, so swift in thought; that treasures up in memory such multitudes and varieties of things past, and comes likewise upon new things . . . can be of no mortal nature."

Student: And yet I do not quite understand. Your outline is not always distinct. Your voice however is deep, clear and not squeaky.

Rabelais: I was more interested in words than in my exterior aspect, I am therefore vocal rather than spatial.

Student: I came here in hopes of this meeting, yet I confess I can scarcely read you. I admire and close the book, as not infrequently happens with "classics."

Rabelais: I am the last person to censure you, and your admiration is perhaps due to a fault in your taste. I should have paid more heed to DeBellay, young Joachim.

Student: You do not find him a prig?

Rabelais: I find no man a prig who takes serious thought for the language.

Student: And your own? Even Voltaire called it an amassment of ordure.

Rabelais: And later changed his opinion.

Student: Others have blamed your age, saying you had to half-bury your wisdom in filth to make it acceptable.

Rabelais: And you would put this blame on my age? And take the full blame for your writing?

Student: My writing?

Rabelais: Yes, a quatrain, without which I should scarcely have come here.

Sweet C. . . . in h. . . spew up some. . . .
(pardon me for intruding my own name at this point, but even Dante has done the like, with a remark that he found it unfitting)—to proceed then:

. . . . . .some Rabelais
To . . . . . and . . . . . and to define today
In fitting fashion, and her monument
Heap up to her in fadeless ex . . . . .

Student: My license in those lines is exceptional.

Rabelais: And you have written on journalists, or rather an imaginary plaint of the journalists:

Where s. . . . ., s. . . . . and p. . . . . on jews conspire,
And editorial maggots . . . . about,
We gather . . . . -smeared bread, or drive a snout
Still deeper in the swim-brown of the mire.
O . . . . O . . . . . O b. . . . . b. . . . . b. . . .
O c. . . . . O . . . . O . . . . . .'s attire
Smeared with . . . . . .

Really I can not continue, no printer would pass it.

Student: Quite out of my usual . . . . . .

Rabelais: There is still another on publishers, or rather on *la vie litteraire,* a sestina almost wholly in asterisks, and a short strophe on the American president.

Student: Can you blame . . .

Rabelais: I am scarcely . . . . . eh. . . . .

Student: Beside, these are but a few scattered outbursts, you kept up your flow through whole volumes.

Rabelais: You have spent six years in your college and university, and a few more in struggles with editors; I had had thirty years in that sink of a cloister, is it

likely that your disgusts would need such voluminous purging? Consider, when I was nine years of age they put me in that louse-breeding abomination. I was forty before I broke loose.

Student: Why at that particular moment?

Rabelais: They had taken away my books. Brother Amy got hold of a Virgil. We opened it, *sortes,* the first line:

Heu, fuge crudeles teeras, fuge litus avarum.

We read that line and departed. You may thank God your age is different. You may thank God your life has been different. Thirty years mewed up with monks! After that can you blame me my style? Have you any accurate gauge of stupidities?

Student: I have, as you admit, passed some years in my university. I have seen some opposition to learning.

Rabelais: No one in your day has sworn to annihilate the cult of Greek letters; they have not separated you from your books; they have not rung bells expressly to keep you from reading.

Student: Bells! later. There is a pasty-faced vicar in Kensington who had his dam'd bells rung over my head for four consecutive winters, L'Ile Sonnanto transferred to the middle of London! They have tried to smother the good ones with bad ones. Books I mean, God knows the chime was a musicless abomination. They have smothered good books with bad ones.

Rabelais: This will never fool a true poet; for the rest, it does not matter whether they drone masses or lectures. They observe their fasts with the intellect. Have they actually sequestered your books?

Student: No. But I have a friend, of your order, a monk. They took away his book for two years. I ad-

mit they set him to hearing confessions; to going about in the world. It may have broadened his outlook, or benefited his eyesight. I do not think it wholly irrational, though it must have been extremely annoying.

Rabelais: Where was it?

Student: In Spain.

Rabelais: You are driven south of the Pyrenees to find your confuting example. Would you find the like in this country?

Student: I doubt it. The Orders are banished.

Rabelais: Or in your own?

Student: Never.

Rabelais: And you were enraged with your university?

Student: I thought some of the customs quite stupid.

Rabelais: Can you conceive a life so infernally and abysmally stupid that the air of an university was wine and excitement beside it?

Student: You speak of a time when scholarship was new, when humanism had not given way to philology. We have no one like Henry Stephen, no one comparable to Helia Andrea. The rôle of your monastery is now assumed by the "institutions of learning," the spirit of your class-room is found among a few scattered enthusiasts, men half ignorant in the present "scholarly" sense, but alive with the spirit of learning, avid of truth, avid of beauty, avid of strange and out of the way bits of knowledge. Do you like this scrap of Pratinas?

Rabelais (*reads*):

Ἐμὸς ἐμὸς ὁ Βρομίος.
Εμὲ δεῖ κελαδεῖν,
Εμὶ δεῖ παταγεῖν,
Ἂν ὄρεα εσσύμενον

Μετὰ Ναίδων
Οἷα τε κύκνον ἄγοντα
Ποικιλόπτερον μέλος
Τᾶν ἀοιδᾶν. . . .

Student: The movement is interesting. I am "educated," I am considerably more than a "graduate." I confess that I can not translate it.

Rabelais: What in God's name have they taught you?!!

Student: I hope they have taught me nothing. I managed to read many books despite their attempts at suppression, or rather perversion.

Rabelais: I think you speak in a passion; that you magnify petty annoyances. Since then, you have been in the world for some years, you have been able to move at your freedom.

Student: I speak in no passion when I say that the whole aim, or at least the drive, of modern philology is to make a man stupid; to turn his mind from the fire of genius and smother him with things unessential. Germany has so stultified her savants that they have had no present perception, the men who should have perceived were all imbedded in "scholarship." And as for freedom, no man is free who has not the modicum of an income. If I had but fifty francs weekly . . . . . .

Rabelais: Weekly? C. . . . . J. . . . !

Student: You forget that the value of money has very considerably altered.

Rabelais: Admitted.

Student: Well?

Rabelais: Well, who has constrained you? The press in your day is free.

Student: C. . . . . J. . . . !

Rabelais: But the press in your day is free.

Student: There is not a book goes to the press in my country, or in England, but a society of . . . . . in one, or in the other a pie-headed ignorant printer paws over it to decide how much is indecent.

Rabelais: But they print my works in translation.

Student: Your work is a classic. They also print Trimalcio's "Supper," and the tales of Suetonius, and red-headed virgins annotate the writings of Martial, but let a novelist mention a privvy, or a poet the rear side of a woman, and the whole town reeks with an uproar. In England a scientific work was recently censored. A great discovery was kept secret three years. For the rest, I do not speak of obscenity. Obscene books are sold in the rubber shops, they are doled out with quack medicines, societies for the Suppression of Vice go into all details, and thereby attain circulation. Masterpieces are decked out with lewd covers to entoil one part of the public, but let an unknown man write clear and clean realism; let a poet use the speech of his predecessors, either being as antiseptic as the instruments of a surgeon, and out of the most debased and ignorant classes they choose him his sieve and his censor.

Rabelais: But surely these things are avoidable?

Student: The popular novelist, the teaser and tickler, casts what they call a veil, or caul, over his language. He pimps with suggestion. The printer sees only one word at a time, and tons of such books are passed yearly, the members of the Royal Automobile Club and of the Isthmian and Fly Fishers are not concerned with the question of morals.

Rabelais: You mistake me, I did not mean this sort of evasion, I did not mean that a man should ruin his writing or join the ranks of procurers.

Student: Well?

Rabelais: Other means. There is what is called private printing.

Student: I have had a printer refuse to print lines "in any form" private or public, perfectly innocent lines, lines refused thus in London, which appeared and caused no blush in Chicago; and vice-versa, lines refused in Chicago and printed by a fat-headed prude—Oh, most fat-headed—in London, a man who will have no ruffling of anyone's skirts, and who will not let you say that some children do not enjoy the proximity of their parents.

Rabelais: At least you are free from theology.

Student: If you pinch the old whore by the toes you will find a press clique against you; you will come up against "boycott"; people will rush into your publisher's office with threats. Have you ever heard of "the libraries"?

Rabelais: I have heard the name, but not associated with strange forms of blackmail.

Student: I admit they do not affect serious writers.

Rabelais: But you think your age as stupid as mine.

Student: Humanity is a herd, eaten by perpetual follies. A few in each age escape, the rest remain savages, "That deyed the Arbia crimson." Were the shores of Gallipoli paler, that showed red to the airmen flying thousands of feet above them?

Rabelais: Airmen. Intercommunication is civilization. Your life is full of convenience.

Student: And men as stupid as ever. We have no one like Henry Stephen. Have you ever read Galdos' "Dona Perfecta"? In every country you will find such nests of provincials. Change but a few names and customs. Each Klein-Stadt has its local gods and will kill those who offend them. In one place it is religion, in

another some crank theory of hygiene or morals, or even of prudery which takes no moral concern.

Rabelais: Yet all peoples act the same way. The same so-called "vices" are everywhere present, unless your nation has invented some new ones.

Student: Greed and hypocrisy, there is little novelty to be got out of either. At present there is a new tone, a new *timbre* of lying, a sort of habit, almost a faculty for refraining from connecting words with a fact. An inconception of their interrelations.

Rabelais: Let us keep out of politics.

Student: Damn it, have you ever met presbyterians?

Rabelais: You forget that I lived in the time of John Calvin.

Student: Let us leave this and talk of your books.

Rabelais: My book has the fault of most books, there are too many words in it. I was tainted with monkish habits, with the marasmus of allegory, of putting one thing for another: the clumsiest method of satire. I doubt if any modern will read me.

Student: I knew a man read you for joy of the words, for the opulence of your vocabulary.

Rabelais: Which would do him no good unless he could keep all the words on his tongue. Tell me, can you read them, they are often merely piled up in heaps.

Student: I confess that I can not. I take a page and then stop.

Rabelais: Allegory, all damnable allegory! And can you read Brantôme?

Student: I can read a fair chunk of Brantôme. The repetition is wearing.

Rabelais: And you think your age is as stupid as mine? Even letters are better, a critical sense is developed.

Student: We lack the old vigour.

Rabelais: A phrase you have got from professors! Vigour was not lacking in Stendhal, I doubt if it is lacking in your day. And as for the world being as stupid, are your friends tied to the stake, as was Etienne Dolet, with an "Ave" wrung out of him to get him strangled instead of roasted. Do you have to stand making professions like Budé?!!

> Vivens videnque gloria mea frui
> Volo: nihil juvat mortuum
> Quod vel diserte scripserit vel fecerit
> Animose.

Student: What is that?

Rabelais: Some verses of Dolet's. And are you starved like Desperiers, Bonaventura, and driven to suicide?

Student: The last auto-da-fe was in 1759. The inquisition re-established in 1824.

Rabelais: Spain again! I was speaking of . . .

Student: We are not yet out of the wood. There is no end to this warfare. You talk of freedom. Have you heard of the Hammersmith borough council, or the society to suppress all brothels in "Rangoon and other stations in Burmah"? If it is not creed it is morals. Your life and works would not be possible nowadays. To put it mildly, you would be docked your professorship.

Rabelais: I should find other forms of freedom. As for personal morals: There are certain so-called "sins" of which no man ever repented. There are certain contraventions of hygiene which always prove inconvenient. None but superstitious and ignorant people can ever

confuse these two issues. And as hygiene is always changing; as it alters with our knowledge of physick, intelligent men will keep pace with it. There can be no permanent boundaries to morals.

Student: The droits du seigneur were doubtless, at one time, religious. When ecclesiastics enjoyed them, they did so, in order to take the vengeance of the spirit-world upon their own shoulders, thereby shielding and sparing the husband.

Rabelais: Indeed you are far past these things. Your age no longer accepts them.

Student: My age is beset with cranks of all forms and sizes. They will not allow a man wine. They will not allow him changes of women. This glass . . . . . .

Rabelais: There is still some in the last bottle. De-Thou has paid it a compliment:

Aussi Bacchus . . . .
Jusqu'en l'autre monde m'envoye
De quoi dissiper mon chagrin,
Car de ma Maison paternelle
Il vient de faire un Cabaret
Où le plaisir se renouvelle
Entre le blanc et le clairet. . .
On n'y porte plus sa pensée
Qu'aux douceurs d'un Vin frais et net.
Que si Pluton, que rien ne tente,
Vouloit se payer de raison,
Et permettre à mon Ombre errante
De faire un tour à ma Maison;
Quelque prix que j'eu püsse attendre,
Ce seroit mon premier souhait
De la louer ou de la vendre,
Pour l'usage que l'on en fait.

Student: There are states where a man's tobacco is not safe from invasion. Bishops, novelists, decrepit and aged generals, purveyors of tales of detectives . . . . . .

Rabelais: Have they ever interfered with your pleasures?

Student: Damn well let them try it !!!

Rabelais: I am afraid you would have been burned in my century.

RELIGIO,

OR THE CHILD'S GUIDE TO KNOWLEDGE

What is a god?

A god is an eternal state of mind.

What is a faun?

A faun is an elemental creature.

What is a nymph?

A nymph is an elemental creature.

When is a god manifest?

When the states of mind take form.

When does a man become a god?

When he enters one of these states of mind.

What is the nature of the forms whereby a god is manifest?

They are variable but retain certain distinguishing characteristics.

Are all eternal states of mind gods?

We consider them so to be.

Are all durable states of mind gods?

They are not.

By what characteristic may we know the divine forms?

By beauty.

And if the presented forms are unbeautiful?

They are demons.

If they are grotesque?

They may be well-minded genii.

What are the kinds of knowledge?

There are immediate knowledge and hearsay.

Is hearsay of any value?

Of some.

What is the greatest hearsay?

The greatest hearsay is the tradition of the gods.

Of what use is this tradition?

It tells us to be ready to look.

In what manner do gods appear?

Formed and formlessly.

To what do they appear when formed?

To the sense of vision.

And when formless?

To the sense of knowledge.

May they when formed appear to anything save the sense of vision?

We may gain a sense of their presence as if they were standing behind us.

And in this case they may possess form?

We may feel that they do possess form.

Are there names for the gods?

The gods have many names. It is by names that they are handled in the tradition.

Is there harm in using these names?

There is no harm in thinking of the gods by their names.

How should one perceive a god, by his name?

It is better to perceive a god by form, or by the sense of knowledge, and, after perceiving him thus, to consider his name or to "think what god it may be."

Do we know the number of the gods?

It would be rash to say that we do. A man should be content with a reasonable number.

What are the gods of this rite?

Apollo, and in some sense Helios, Diana in some of her phases, also the Cytherean goddess.

To what other gods is it fitting, in harmony or in adjunction with these rites, to give incense?

To Koré and to Demeter, also to lares and to oreiads and to certain elemental creatures.

How is it fitting to please these lares and other creatures?

It is fitting to please and to nourish them with flowers.

Do they have need of such nutriment?

It would be foolish to believe that they have, nevertheless it bodes well for us that they should be pleased to appear.

Are these things so in the East?

This rite is made for the West.

AUX ETUVES DE WIESBADEN

A. D. 1451

THEY *entered between two fir trees. A path of irregular flat pentagonal stones led along between shrubbery. Halting by the central court in a sort of narrow gallery, the large tank was below them, and in it some thirty or forty blond nereides for the most part well-muscled, with smooth flaxen hair and smooth faces—a generic resemblance. A slender brown wench sat at one end listlessly dabbling her feet from the spring-board. Here the water was deeper.*

The rest of them, all being clothed in white linen shifts held up by one strap over the shoulder and reaching half-way to the knees,—the rest of them waded waist- and breast-deep in the shallower end of the pool, their shifts bellied up by the air, spread out like huge bobbing cauliflowers.

The whole tank was sunken beneath the level of the gardens, and paved and panelled with marble, a rather cheap marble. To the left of the little gallery, where the strangers had halted, an ample dowager sat in a perfectly circular tub formed rather like the third of an hogshead, behind her a small hemicycle of yew trees kept off any chance draught from the North. She likewise wore a shift of white linen. On a plank before her, reaching from the left to the right side of her tank-hogshead, were a salver with a large piece of raw smoked ham, a few leeks, a tankard of darkish beer, a back-scratcher, the ham-knife.

Before them, from some sheds, there arose a faint steam, the sound of grunts and squeals and an aroma of elderly bodies. From the opposite gallery a white-bearded town-councillor began to throw grapes to the nereides.

Le Sieur de Maunsier: They have closed these places in Marseilles, causa flagitii, they were thought to be bad for our morals.

Poggio: And are your morals improved?

Maunsier: Nein, bin nicht verbessert.

Poggio: And are the morals of Marseilles any better?

Maunsier: Not that I know of. Assignations are equally frequent; the assignors less cleanly; their health, I presume, none the better. The Church has always been dead set against washing. St. Clement of Alexandria forbade all bathing by women. He made no exception. Baptism and the last oiling were enough, to his thinking. St. Augustine, more genial and human, took a bath to console himself for the death of his mother. I suspect that it was a hot one. Being clean is a pagan virtue, and no part of the light from Judaea.

Poggio: Say rather a Roman, the Greek philosophers died, for the most part, of lice. Only the system of empire, plus a dilettantism in luxuries, could have brought mankind to the wash-tub. The christians have made dirt a matter of morals: a son of God can have no need to be cleansed; a worm begotten in sin and foredoomed to eternal damnation in a bottle of the seven great stenches, would do ill to refine his nostrils and unfit himself for his future. For the elect and the rejected alike, washing is either noxious or useless—they must be transcendent at all costs. The rest of the world must be like them; they therefore look after our morals.

Yet this last term is wholly elastic. There is no system which has not been tried, wedlock or unwedlock, a breeding on one mare or on many; all with equal success, with equal flaws, crimes, and discomforts.

Maunsier: I have heard there was no adultery found in Sparta.

Poggio: There was no adultery among the Lacedaemonians because they held all women in common. A rumour of Troy had reached the ears of Lycurgus: "So Lycurgus thought also there were many foolish vain joys and fancies, in the laws and orders of other nations, touching marriage: seeing they caused their bitches and mares to be lined and covered with the fairest dogs and goodliest stallions that might be gotten, praying and paying the maisters and owners of the same: and kept their wives notwithstanding shut up safe under lock and key, for fear lest other than themselves might get them with child, although themselves were sickly, feeble-brained, extreme old." I think I quote rightly from Plutarch. The girls of Lacedaemon played naked before the young men, that their defects should be remedied rather than hidden. A man first went by stealth to his mistress, and this for a long space of time; thus learning address and silence. For better breeding Lycurgus would not have children the property of any one man, but sought only that they should be born of the lustiest women, begotten of the most vigorous seed.

Maunsier: Christianity would put an end to all that, yet I think there was some trace left in the *lex Germanica,* and some in our Provençal love customs; for under the first a woman kept whatever man she liked, so long as she fancied: the children being brought up by her brothers, being a part of the female family, *cognati.* The chivalric system is smothered with mysticism, and is

focussed all upon pleasure, but the habit of older folk-custom is at the base of its freedoms, its debates were on matters of modus.

These girls look very well in their shifts. They confound the precepts of temperance.

Poggio: I have walked and ridden through Europe, annoting, observing. I am interested in food and the animal.

There was, before I left Rome, a black woman for sale in the market. Her breasts stuck out like great funnels, her shoulders were rounded like basins, her biceps was that of a wheel-wright; these upper portions of her, to say nothing of her flattened-in face, were disgusting and hideous, but she had a belly like Venus, from below the breasts to the crotch she was like a splendid Greek fragment. She came of a tropical meat-eating tribe. I observe that gramenivorous and fruit-eating races have shrunken arms and shoulders, narrow backs and weakly distended stomachs. Much beer enlarges the girth in old age, at a time when the form in any case, might have ceased to give pleasure. The men of this nubian tribe were not lovely; they were shaped rather like almonds: the curious roundness in the front aspect, a gradual sloping-in toward the feet, a very great muscular power, a silhouette not unlike that of an egg, or perhaps more like that of a tadpole.

Civilized man grows more frog-like, his members become departmental.

Maunsier: But fixed. Man falls into a set gamut of types. His thoughts also. The informed and the uninformed, the clodhopper and the civilian are equally incapable of trusting an unwonted appearance. Last week I met an exception, and for that cause the matter is now in my mind, and I am, as they say "forming conclu-

sions." The exception, an Englishman, had found a parochial beauty in Savoia, in the inn of a mountain town, a "local character" as he called her. He could not describe her features with any minute precision, but she wore, he remembered, a dress tied up with innumerable small bits of ribbon in long narrow bow-knots, limp, hanging like grass-blades caught in the middle. She came in to him as a sort of exhibit. He kissed her hand. She sat by his bedside and conversed with him pleasantly. They were quite alone for some time. Nothing more happened. From something in his manner, I am inclined to believe him. He was convinced that nothing more ever did happen.

Poggio: Men have a curious desire for uniformity. Bawdry and religion are all one before it.

Maunsier: They call it the road to salvation.

Poggio: They ruin the shape of life for a dogmatic exterior. What dignity have we over the beasts, save to be once, and to be irreplaceable!

I myself am a rag-bag, a mass of sights and citations, but I will not beat down life for the sake of a model.

Maunsier: Would you be "without an ideal?"

Poggio: Is beauty an ideal like the rest? I confess I see the need of no other. When I read that from the breast of the Princess Hellene there was cast a cup of "white gold," the sculptor finding no better model; and that this cup was long shown in the temple at Lyndos, which is in the island of Rhodes; or when I read, as I think is the textual order, first of the cup and then of its origin, there comes upon me a discontent with human imperfection. I am no longer left in the "slough of the senses," but am full of heroic life, for the instant. The sap mounts in the twigs of my being.

The visions of the mystics give them like courage, it may be.

Maunsier: My poor uncle, he will talk of the slough of the senses and the "loathsome pit of contentment." His "ideas" are with other men's conduct. He seeks to set bounds to their actions.

I cannot make out the mystics; nor how far we may trust to our senses, and how far to sudden sights that come from within us, or at least seem to spring up within us: a mirage, an elf-music; and how far we are prey to the written word.

Poggio: I have seen many women in dreams, surpassing most mortal women, but I doubt if I have on their account been stirred to more thoughts of beauty, than I have had meditating upon that passage in latin, concerning the temple of Pallas at Lyndos and its memorial cup of white gold. I do not count myself among Plato's disciples.

Maunsier: And yet it is forced upon us that all these things breed their fanatics; that even a style might become a religion and breed bigots as many, and pestilent.

Poggio: Our blessing is to live in an age when some can hold a fair balance. It can not last; many are half-drunk with freedom; a greed for taxes at Rome will raise up envy, a cultivated court will disappear in the ensuing reaction. We are fortunate to live in the wink, the eye of mankind is open; for an instant, hardly more than an instant. Men are prized for being unique. I do not mean merely fantastic. That is to say there are a few of us who can prize a man for thinking, in himself, rather than for a passion to make others think with him.

Perhaps you are right about style; an established style

could be as much a nuisance as any other establishment. Yet there must be a reputable normal. Tacitus is too crabbed. The rhetoricians ruined the empire. Let us go on to our baths.

L'HOMME MOYEN SENSUEL[1]

"I hate a dumpy woman"
—*George Gordon, Lord Byron.*

'Tis of my country that I would endite,
In hope to set some misconceptions right.
My country? I love it well, and those good fellows
Who, since their wit's unknown, escape the gallows.
But you stuffed coats who're neither tepid nor distinctly boreal,
Pimping, conceited, placid, editorial,
Could I but speak as 'twere in the "Restoration"
I would articulate your perdamnation.
This year perforce I must with circumspection—
For Mencken states somewhere, in this connection:
"It is a moral nation we infest."

[1] [*Note:* It is through no fault of my own that this diversion was not given to the reader two years ago; but the commercial said it would not add to their transcendent popularity, and the vers-libre fanatics pointed out that I had used a form of terminal consonance no longer permitted, and my admirers (*j'en ai*), ever nobly desirous of erecting me into a sort of national institution, declared the work "unworthy" of my mordant and serious genius. So a couple of the old gentlemen are dead in the interim, and, alas, two of the great men mentioned in passing, and the reader will have to accept the opusculus for what it is, some rhymes written in 1915. I would give them now with dedication "To the Anonymous Compatriot Who Produced the Poem 'Fanny,' Somewhere About 1820", if this form of centennial homage be permitted me. It was no small thing to have written, in America, at that distant date, a poem of over forty pages which one can still read without labour. *E. P.*]

124963

Despite such reins and checks I'll do my best,
An art! You all respect the arts, from that infant tick
Who's now the editor of *The Atlantic,*
From Comstock's self, down to the meanest resident,
Till up again, right up, we reach the president,
Who shows his taste in his ambassadors:
A novelist, a publisher, to pay old scores,
A novelist, a publisher and a preacher,
That's sent to Holland, a most particular feature,
Henry Van Dyke, who thinks to charm the Muse you pack her in
A sort of stinking diliquescent saccharine.
The constitution of our land, O Socrates,
Was made to incubate such mediocrities,
These and a taste in books that's grown perennial
And antedates the Philadelphia centennial.
Still I'd respect you more if you could bury
Mabie, and Lyman Abbot and George Woodberry,
For minds so wholly founded upon quotations
Are not the best of pulse for infant nations.
Dulness herself, that abject spirit, chortles
To see your forty self-baptized immortals,
And holds her sides where swelling laughter cracks 'em
Before the "Ars Poetica" of Hiram Maxim.
All one can say of this refining medium
Is "*Zut! Cinque lettres!*" a banished gallic idiom,
Their doddering ignorance is waxed so notable
'Tis time that it was capped with something quotable.

Here Radway grew, the fruit of pantosocracy,
The very fairest flower of their gynocracy.
Radway? My hero, for it will be more inspiring

If I set forth a bawdy plot like Byron
Than if I treat the nation as a whole.
Radway grew up. These forces shaped his soul;
These, and yet God, and Dr. Parkhurst's god, the
N. Y. *Journal*
(Which pays him more per week than The Supernal).
These and another godlet of that day, your day
(You feed a hen on grease, perhaps she'll lay
The sterile egg that is still eatable:
"Prolific Noyes" with output undefeatable).
From these he (Radway) learnt, from provosts and
from editors unyielding
And innocent of Stendhal, Flaubert, Maupassant and
Fielding.
They set their mind (it's still in that condition)—
May we repeat; the Centennial Exposition
At Philadelphia, 1876?
What it knew then, it knows, and there it sticks.
And yet another, a "charming man," "sweet nature,"
but was Gilder,
De mortuis verum, truly the master builder?

From these he learnt. Poe, Whitman, Whistler, men,
their recognition
Was got abroad, what better luck do you wish 'em,
When writing well has not yet been forgiven
In Boston, to Henry James, the greatest whom we've
seen living.
And timorous love of the innocuous
Brought from Gt. Britain and dumped down a'top
of us,
Till you may take your choice: to feel the edge of
satire or
Read Bennett or some other flaccid flatterer.

Despite it all, despite your Red Bloods, febrile concupiscence
Whose blubbering yowls you take for passion's essence;
Despite it all, your compound predilection
For ignorance, its growth and its protection
(Vide the tariff), I will hang simple facts
Upon a tale, to combat other facts,
"Message to Garcia," Mosher's propagandas
That are the nation's botts, collicks and glanders.
Or from the feats of Sumner cull it? Think,
Could Freud or Jung unfathom such a sink?

My hero, Radway, I have named, in truth,
Some forces among those which "formed" his youth:
These heavy weights, these dodgers and these preachers,
Crusaders, lecturers and secret lechers,
Who wrought about his "soul" their stale infection.
These are the high-brows, add to this collection
The social itch, the almost, all but, not quite, fascinating,
Piquante, delicious, luscious, captivating:
Puffed satin, and silk stockings, where the knee
Clings to the skirt in strict (vide: *"Vogue"*) propriety.
Three thousand chorus girls and all unkissed,
O state sans song, sans home-grown wine, sans realist!
"Tell me not in mournful wish-wash
Life's a sort of sugared dish-wash"!
Radway had read the various evening papers
And yearned to imitate the Waldorf capers
As held before him in that unsullied mirror

The daily press, and monthlies nine cents dearer.
They held the very marrow of the ideals
That fed his spirit; were his mental meals.
Also, he'd read of christian virtues in
That canting rag called *Everybody's Magazine,*
And heard a clergy that tries on more wheezes
Than e'er were heard of by Our Lord Ch . . . . J . . . .
So he "faced life" with rather mixed intentions,
He had attended country Christian Endeavour Conventions,
Where one gets more chances
Than Spanish ladies had in old romances.
(Let him rebuke who ne'er has known the pure Platonic grapple,
Or hugged two girls at once behind a chapel.)
Such practices diluted rural boredom
Though some approved of them, and some deplored 'em.
Such was he when he got his mother's letter
And would not think a thing that could upset her. . . .
Yet saw an "ad." "To-night, THE HUDSON SAIL,
With forty queens, and music to regale
The select company: beauties you all would know
By name, if named." So it was phrased, or rather somewhat so
I have mislaid the "ad.," but note the touch,
Note, reader, note the sentimental touch:
His mother's birthday gift. (How pitiful
That only sentimental stuff will sell!)

Yet Radway went. A circumspectious prig!
And then that woman like a guinea-pig
Accosted, that's the word, accosted him,

Thereon the amorous calor slightly frosted him.
(I burn, I freeze, I sweat, said the fair Greek,
I speak in contradictions, so to speak.)

I've told his training, he was never bashful,
And his pockets by ma's aid, that night with cash full,
The invitation had no need of fine æsthetic,
Nor did disgust prove such a strong emetic
That we, with Masefield's vein, in the next sentence
Record "Odd's blood! Ouch! Ouch!" a prayer, his swift repentance.

No, no, they danced. The music grew much louder
As he inhaled the still fumes of rice-powder.
Then there came other nights, came slow but certain
And were such nights that we should "draw the curtain"
In writing fiction on uncertain chances
Of publication; "Circumstances,"
As the editor of *The Century* says in print,
"Compel a certain silence and restraint."
Still we will bring our "fiction as near to fact" as
The Sunday school brings virtues into practice.

Soon our hero could manage once a week,
Not that his pay had risen, and no leak
Was found in his employer's cash. He learned the lay of cheaper places,
And then Radway began to go the paces:
A rosy path, a sort of vernal ingress,
And Truth should here be careful of her thin dress—
Though males of seventy, who fear truths naked harm us,
Must think Truth looks as they do in wool pyjamas.

(My country, I've said your morals and your thoughts
are stale ones,
But surely the worst of your old-women are the male
ones.)

Why paint these days? An insurance inspector
For fires and odd risks, could in this sector
Furnish more date for a compilation
Than I can from this distant land and station,
Unless perhaps I should have recourse to
One of those firm-faced inspecting women, who
Find pretty Irish girls in Chinese laundries,
Up stairs, the third floor up, and have such quandaries
As to how and why and whereby they got in
And for what earthly reason they remain. . . .
Alas, eheu, one question that sorely vexes
The serious social folk is "just what sex is."
Though it will, of course, pass off with social science
In which their mentors place such wide reliance.
De Gourmont says that fifty grunts are all that will be
prized.
Of language, by men wholly socialized,
With signs as many, that shall represent 'em
When thoroughly socialized printers want to print 'em.
"As free of mobs as kings"? I'd have men free of
that invidious,
Lurking, serpentine, amphibious and insidious
Power that compels 'em
To be so much alike that every dog that smells 'em,
Thinks one identity is
Smeared o'er the lot in equal quantities.
Still we look toward the day when man, with unction,
Will long only to be a *social function,*
And even Zeus' wild lightning fear to strike

Lest it should fail to treat all men alike.
And I can hear an old man saying: "Oh, the rub!
"I see them sitting in the Harvard Club,
"And rate 'em up at just so much per head,
"Know what they think, and just what books they've read,
"Till I have viewed straw hats and their habitual clothing
"All the same style, same cut, with perfect loathing."

So Radway walked, quite like the other men,
Out into the crepuscular half-light, now and then;
Saw what the city offered, cast an eye
Upon Manhattan's gorgeous panoply,
The flood of limbs upon Eighth Avenue
To beat Prague, Budapesth, Vienna or Moscow,[1]
Such animal invigorating carriage
As nothing can restrain or much disparage. . . .
Still he was not given up to brute enjoyment,
An anxious sentiment was his employment,
For memory of the first warm night still cast a haze o'er
The mind of Radway, whene'er he found a pair of purple stays or
Some other quaint reminder of the occasion
That first made him believe in immoral suasion.
A temperate man, a thin potationist, each day
A silent hunter off the Great White Way,
He read *The Century* and thought it nice
To be not too well known in haunts of vice—
The prominent haunts, where one might recognize him,
And in his daily walks duly capsize him.

[1] Pronounce like respectable Russians: "*Mussqu.*"

Thus he eschewed the bright red-walled cafés and
Was never one of whom one speaks as "brazen'd."

Some men will live as prudes in their own village
And make the tour abroad for their wild tillage—
I knew a tourist agent, one whose art is
To run such tours. He calls 'em . . . . . house parties.
But Radway was a patriot whose venality
Was purer in its love of one locality,
A home-industrious worker to perfection,
A senatorial jobber for protection,
Especially on books, lest knowledge break in
Upon the national brains and set 'em achin'.
('Tis an anomaly in our large land of freedom,
You can not get cheap books, even if you need 'em).
Radway was ignorant as an editor,
And, heavenly, holy gods! I can't say more,
Though I know one, a very base detractor,
Who has the phrase "As ignorant as an actor."

But turn to Radway: the first night on the river,
Running so close to "hell" it sends a shiver
Down Rodyheaver's prophylactic spine,
Let mé return to this bold theme of mine,
Of Radway. O clap hand ye moralists!
And meditate upon the Lord's conquests.
When last I met him, he was a pillar in
An organization for the suppression of sin . . . .
Not that he'd changed his tastes, nor yet his habits,
(Such changes don't occur in men, or rabbits).
Not that he was a saint, nor was top-loftical
In spiritual aspirations, but he found it profitable,
For as Ben Franklin said, with such urbanity:
"Nothing will pay thee, friend, like Christianity."

And in our day thus saith the Evangelist:
"Tent preachin' is the kind that pays the best."

'Twas as a business asset *pure an' simple*
That Radway joined the Baptist Broadway Temple.

I find no moral for a peroration,
He is the prototype of half the nation.

PIERROTS

From the French of Jules Laforgue

(Scene courte mais typique)

Your eyes! Since I lost their incandescence
Flat calm engulphs my jibs,
The shudder of *Vae soli* gurgles beneath my ribs.

You should have seen me after the affray,
I rushed about in the most agitated way
Crying: My God, my God, what will she say?!

My soul's antennæ are prey to such perturbations,
Wounded by your indirectness in these situations
And your bundle of mundane complications.

Your eyes put me up to it.
I thought: Yes, divine, these eyes, but what exists
Behind them? What's there? Her soul's an affair
for oculists.

And I am sliced with loyal æsthetics.
Hate tremolos and national frenetics.
In brief, violet is the ground tone of my phonetics.

I am not "that chap there" nor yet "The Superb"
But my soul, the sort which harsh sounds disturb,
Is, at bottom, distinguished and fresh as a March herb.

My nerves still register the sounds of contra-bass',
I can walk about without fidgeting when people pass,
Without smirking into a pocket-looking-glass.

Yes, I have rubbed shoulders and knocked off my
chips
Outside your set but, having kept faith in your eyes,
You might pardon such slips.
Eh, make it up?
Soothings, confessions;
These new concessions
Hurl me into such a mass of divergent impressions.

STARK REALISM

This Little Pig Went to Market

(*A Search for the National Type*)

This little American went to Vienna. He said it was "Gawd's Öwne City." He knew all the bath-houses and dance halls. He was there for a week. He never forgot it— No, not even when he became a Captain in the Great American Navy and spent six months in Samoa.

This little American went West—to the Middle-West, where he came from. He smoked cigars, for cigarettes are illegal in Indiana, that land where Lew Wallace died, that land of the literary tradition. He ate pie of all sorts, and read the daily papers—especially those of strong local interest. He despised European culture as an indiscriminate whole.

Peace to his ashes.

This little American went to the great city Manhattan. He made two dollars and a half per week. He saw the sheeny girls on the East Side who lunch on two cents worth of bread and sausages, and dress with a flash on the remainder. He nearly died of it. Then he got a rise. He made fifteen dollars per weeek selling insurance. He wore a monocle with a tortoise-shell rim. He

dressed up to "Bond St." No lord in The Row has surpassed him.

He was a damn good fellow.

This little American went to Oxford. He rented Oscar's late rooms. He talked about the nature of the Beautiful. He swam in the wake of Santyana. He had a great cut glass bowl full of lilies. He believed in Sin. His life was immaculate. He was the last convert to catholicism.

This little American had always been adored—and quite silent. He was bashful. He rowed on his college crew. He had a bright pink complexion. He was a dealer in bonds, but not really wicked. He would walk into a man's office and say: "Do you want any stock? . . eh . . . . eh . . I don't know anything about it. They say it's all right." Some people like that sort of thing; though it is not the "ideal business man" as you read of him in *Success* and in Mr. Lorimer's papers.

This little American had rotten luck; he was educated—soundly and thoroughly educated. His mother always bought his underwear by the dozen, so that he should be thoroughly supplied. He went from bad to worse, and ended as a dishwasher; always sober and industrious; he began as paymaster in a copper mine. He made hollow tiles in Michigan.

His end was judicious.

This little American spoke through his nose, because he had catarrh or consumption. His scholastic merits were obvious. He studied Roumanian and Arumaic. He married a papal countess.

Peace to his ashes.

TWELVE
DIALOGUES OF
FONTENELLE

I

ALEXANDER AND PHRINÉ

PHRINÉ. You could learn it from all the Thebans who lived in my time. They will tell you that I offered to restore at my own expense the walls of Thebes which you had ruined, provided that they inscribe them as follows: Alexander the Great had cast down these walls, the courtezan Phriné rebuilt them.

Alexander. Were you so afraid that future ages would forget what profession you followed?

Phriné. I excelled in it, and all extraordinary people, of whatever profession, have been mad about monuments and inscriptions.

Alexander. It is true that Rhodope preceded you. The usufruct of her beauty enabled her to build a famous pyramid still standing in Egypt, and I remember that when she was speaking of it the other day to the shades of certain French women who supposed themselves well worth loving, they began to weep, saying that in the country and ages wherein they had so recently lived, pretty women could not earn enough to build pyramids.

Phriné. Yet I had the advantage over Rhodope, for by restoring the Theban walls I brought myself into comparison with you who had been the greatest conqueror in the world; I made it apparent that my beauty was enough to repair the ravages caused by your valour.

Alexander. A new comparison. You were then so proud of your gallantries?

Phriné. And you? Were you so well content with having laid waste a good half of the universe? Had there been but a Phriné in each of the ruined cities, there would remain no trace of your ravages.

Alexander. If I should ever live again I would wish to be an illustrious conqueror.

Phriné. And I a lovable conqueress. Beauty has a natural right to command men, valour has nothing but a right acquired by force. A beautiful woman is of all countries, yet kings themselves and even conquerors are not. For better argument, your father Philip was valiant enough and you also; neither of you could rouse the slightest fear in Demosthenes, who during the whole course of his life did nothing but make violent speeches against you; yet when another Phriné (for the name is a lucky name) was about to lose a case of considerable importance, her lawyer, having used his eloquence all in vain, snatched aside the great veil which half covered her, and the judges who were ready to condemn her, put aside their intention at the sight of her beauties. The reputation of your arms, having a great space of years to accomplish the object, could not keep one orator quiet, yet a fair body corrupted the whole severe Areopagus on the instant.

Alexander. Though you have called another Phriné to your aid, I do not think you have weakened the case for Alexander. It would be a great pity if . . . .

Phriné. I know what you are going to say: Greece, Asia, Persia, the Indes, they are a very fine shopful. However, if I cut away from your glory all that does not belong to you; if I give your soldiers, your captains, and even chance what is due to them, do you think your loss would be slight? But a fair woman shares the honour of her conquests with no one, she owes nothing save

to herself. Believe me, the rank of a pretty woman is no mean one.

Alexander. So you seem to have thought. But do you think the rôle is really all that you made it?

Phriné. No. I will be perfectly frank with you. I exaggerated the rôle of a pretty woman, you strained over hard against yours. We both made too many conquests. Had I had but two or three affairs of gallantry, it would have been all quite in order, there would have been nothing to complain of; but to have had enough such affairs to rebuild the Theban wall was excessive, wholly excessive. On the other hand, had you but conquered Greece, and the neighbouring islands, and perhaps even part of lesser Asia, and made a kingdom of them, nothing would have been more intelligent nor in reason; but always to rush about without knowing whither, to take cities without knowing why, to act always without any design, was a course that would not have pleased many right-minded people.

Alexander. Let right-minded people say what they like. If I had used my bravery and fortune as prudently as all that, I should scarcely ever be mentioned.

Phriné. Nor I either, had I used my beauty so prudently. But if one wishes merely to make a commotion, one may be better equipped than by possessing a character full of reason.

II

DIDO AND STRATONICE

Dido. Alas, my poor Stratonice, I am unhappy. You know what my life was. I maintained so precise a fidelity to my first husband, that I burned myself alive to escape accepting another. For all that I have not escaped evil rumour. It has pleased a poet, a certain Virgil, to transform so strict a prude as I was into a young flirt, charmed by a stranger's nice face the first day she sees him. My whole story turned upside down! The funeral pyre is left me, I admit, but my reason is no more the fear of being forced into a second marriage; I am supposed to be in despair lest the stranger abandon me.

Stratonice. And the consequences might be most dangerous. Very few women will care to immolate themselves for wifely fidelity, if a poet, after their deaths, is to be left free to say what he likes of them. But, perhaps, your Virgil was not so very far wrong; perhaps he has unravelled some intrigue of your life which you had hoped to keep hidden. Who knows? I should not care to take oath about your pyre.

Dido. If there was the slightest likelihood in Virgil's suggestion, I should not mind being suspected; but he makes my lover Æneas, a man dead three centuries before I came into the world.

Stratonice. There is something in what you say. And yet you and Æneas seem to have been expressly

made for each other. You were both forced to leave your native countries; you sought your fortunes with strangers—he a widower, you a widow: all this is in harmony. It is true you were born three hundred years after his death; but Virgil saw so many good reasons for bringing you together that he has counted time for a trifle.

Dido. Is that sensible? Good heavens, are not three hundred years always three hundred, can two people meet and fall in love, despite such an obstacle?

Stratonice. Oh, Virgil was very clever in that. Assuredly he was a man of the world, he wished to show that we must not judge other people's love affairs by appearance, and that those which show least are often the truest.

Dido. I am not at all pleased that he should attack my reputation for the sake of this pretty fable.

Stratonice. But he has not turned you into ridicule, has he? He has not filled your mouth with silliness?

Dido. Not in the least. He has recited me his poem. The whole part that concerns me is divine, almost to the slander itself. In it I am beautiful, I say very fine things about my fictitious passion; and if Virgil had been obliged in the Æneid to show me as a respectable woman, the Æneid would be greatly impoverished.

Stratonice. Well, then, what do you complain of? They ascribe to you a romance which does not belong to you: what a misfortune! And in recompense they ascribe to you a beauty and wit which may not have been yours either.

Dido. A fine consolation!

Stratonice. I am not sufficiently your intimate to be sure how you will feel this, but most women, I think, would rather that people spoke ill of their character

than of their wit or their beauty. Such was my temperament. A painter at the court of my husband, the Syrian king, was discontented with me, and to avenge himself he painted me in the arms of a soldier. He showed the picture and fled. My subjects, zealous for my glory, wished to burn the picture in public, but as I was painted admirably well and with a great deal of beauty—although the attitude was scarcely creditable to my virtue—I forbade them the burning; had the painter recalled, and pardoned him. If you will take my advice, you will do likewise with Virgil.

Dido. That would be all very well if a woman's first merit were to be beautiful or to be full of wit.

Stratonice. I cannot decide about this thing you call the first merit, but in ordinary life the first question about a woman one does not know is: Is she pretty? The second: Is she intelligent? People very rarely ask a third question.

III

ANACREON AND ARISTOTLE

Aristotle. I should never have thought that a maker of ditties would have dared compare himself to a philosopher, to one with so great a reputation as mine.

Anacreon. You did very well for the name of philosopher, yet I, with my "ditties," did not escape being called the wise Anacreon; and I think the title "philosopher" scarcely worth that of "the wise."

Aristotle. Those who gave you that title took no great care what they said. What had you done, at any time, to deserve it?

Anacreon. I had done nothing but drink, sing, and wax amorous; and the wonder is that people called me "the wise" at this price, while they have called you merely "philosopher" and even this has cost you infinite trouble: for how many nights have you passed picking over the thorny questions of dialectic? How many plump books have you written on obscure matters, which perhaps even you yourself do not understand very well?

Aristotle. I confess that you have taken an easier road to wisdom, and you must have been very clever to get more glory with a lute and a bottle than the greatest of men have achieved with vigils and labour.

Anacreon. You pretend to laugh at it, but I maintain that it is more difficult to drink and to sing as I have, than to philosophize as you have philosophized. To sing and to drink, as I did, required that one should

have disentangled one's soul from violent passions; that we should not aspire to things not dependent upon us, that we be ready always to take time as we find it. In short, to begin with, one must arrange a number of little affairs in oneself; and although this needs small dialectic, it is, for all that, not so very easy to manage. But one may at smaller expense philosophize as you have philosophized. One need not cure oneself of either ambition or avarice; one has an agreeable welcome at the court of Alexander the Great; one draws half a million crowns' worth of presents, and they are not all used in physical experiments though such was the donor's intention, in a word, this sort of philosophy drags in things rather opposed to philosophy.

Aristotle. You have heard much scandal about me down here, but, after all, man is man solely on account of his reason, and nothing is finer than to teach men how they ought to use it in studying nature and in unveiling all these enigmas which she sets before us.

Anacreon. That is how men destroy custom in all things! Philosophy is, in itself, an admirable thing, and might be very useful to men, but because she would incommode them if they employed her in daily affairs, or if she dwelt near them and kept some rein on their passions, they have sent her to heaven to look after the planets and put a span on their movements; or if men walk out with her upon earth it is to have her scrutinize all that they see there; they always keep her busy as far as may be from themselves. However, as they wish to be philosophers cheaply they have stretched the sense of the term, and they give it now for the most part to such as seek natural causes.

Aristotle. What more fitting name could one give them.

Anacreon. A philosopher is concerned only with men and by no means with the rest of the universe. An astronomer considers the stars, a physicist nature, a philosopher considers himself. But who would choose this last rôle on so hard a condition? Alas, hardly any one. So we do not insist on philosophers being philosophers, we are content to find them physicists or astronomers. For myself, I was by no means inclined to speculation, but I am sure that there is less philosophy in a great many books which pretend to treat of it, than in some of these little songs which you so greatly despise, in this one, for example:

Would gold prolong my life
I'd have no other care
Than gathering gold,
And when death came
I'd pay the same
To rid me of his presence,
But since harsh fate
Permits not this
And gold is no more needful,
Love and good cheer
Shall share my care—
Ah—ah—ah—ah—
Shall share
My care.

Aristotle. If you wish to limit philosophy to the questions of ethics you will find things in my moral works worth quite as much as your verses: the obscurity for which I am blamed, and which is present perhaps in certain parts of my work, is not to be found in what I have said on this subject, and every one has admitted

that there is nothing in them more clear or more beautiful than what I have said of the passions.

Anacreon. What an error! It is not a matter of defining the passions by rule, as I hear you have done, but of keeping them under. Men give philosophy their troubles to contemplate not to cure, and they have found a method of morals which touches them almost as little as does astronomy. Can one hold in one's laughter at the sight of people who preach the contempt of riches, for money; and of chicken-hearted wastrels brought even to fisticuffs over a definition of the magnanimous?

IV

HOMER AND ÆSOP

Homer. These fables which you have just told me cannot be too greatly admired. You must have needed great art to disguise the most important moral instruction in little stories like these, and to hide your thoughts in metaphor so precise and familiar.

Æsop. It is very pleasant to be praised for such art by you who understood it so deeply.

Homer. Me? I never attempted it.

Æsop. What, did you not intend to conceal profound arcana in your great poems?

Homer. Unfortunately, it never occurred to me.

Æsop. But in my time all the connoisseurs said so; there was nothing in the *Iliad* or in the *Odyssey* to which they did not give the prettiest allegorical meanings. They claimed that all the secrets of theology and of physics, of ethics, and even of mathematics were wound into what you had written. Assuredly there was difficulty in getting them unwrapped: where one found a moral sense, another hit on a physical, but in the end they agreed that you had known everything and that you had said everything, if only one could well understand it.

Homer. Lying aside, I suspected that people would be found to understand subtleties where I had intended none. There is nothing like prophesying far distant matters and waiting the event, or like telling fables and awaiting the allegory.

Æsop. You must have been very daring to leave your readers to put the allegories into your poems! Where would you have been had they taken them in a flat literal sense?

Homer. If they had! It would have incommoded me a little.

Æsop. What! The gods mangling each other, thundering Zeus in an assembly of divinities threatens Hera, the august, with a pummelling; Mars, wounded by Diomed, howls, as you say, like nine or ten thousand men, and acts like none (for instead of tearing the Greeks asunder, he amuses himself complaining to Zeus of his wound), would all this have been good without allegory?

Homer. Why not? You think the human mind seeks only the truth: undeceive yourself. Human intelligence has great sympathy with the false. If you intend telling the truth, you do excellently well to veil it in fables, you render it far more bearable. If you wish to tell fables they will please well enough without containing any truth whatsoever. Truth must borrow the face of falsehood to win good reception in the mind, but the false goes in quite well with its own face, for it so enters its birthplace and its habitual dwelling, the truth comes there as a stranger. I will tell you much more: if I had killed myself imagining allegorical fables, it might well have happened that most folk would have found the fables too probable, and so dispensed with the allegory; as a matter of fact, and one which you ought to know, my gods, such as they are, without mysteries, have not been considered ridiculous.

Æsop. You shake me, I am terribly afraid that people will believe that beasts really talked as they do in my fables.

Homer. A not disagreeable fear!

Æsop. What! if people believe that the gods held such conversations as you have ascribed to them, why shouldn't they believe that animals talked as I make them?

Homer. That is different. Men would like to think the gods as foolish as themselves, but never the beasts as wise.

V

SOCRATES AND MONTAIGNE

Montaigne. Is it really you, divine Socrates? How glad I am of this meeting! I am quite newly come to this country, and I have been seeking you ever since my arrival. Finally, after having filled my book with your name and your praises, I can talk with you, and learn how you possessed that so *naïve* [1] virtue, whereof the *allures* [1] were so natural, and which was without parallel in even your happy age.

Socrates. I am very glad to see a ghost who appears to have been a philosopher; but since you are newly descended, and seeing that it is a long time since I have met any one here (for they leave me pretty much alone, and there is no great crowding to investigate my conversation), let me ask you for news. How goes the world? Has it not altered?

Montaigne. Immensely. You would not know it.

Socrates. I am delighted. I always suspected that it would have to become better and wiser than I had found it in my time.

Montaigne. What do you mean? It is madder and more corrupt than ever before. That is the change I was wishing to speak of, and I expected you to tell me of an age as you had seen it, an age ruled by justice and probity.

Socrates. And I on the other hand was expecting to

[1] Termes de Montaigne.

learn the marvels of the age wherein you have but ceased to exist. But, men at present, do you say, have not corrected their classic follies?

Montaigne. I think it is because you yourself are a classic that you speak so disrespectfully of antiquity; but you must know that our habits are lamentable, things deteriorate day in and day out.

Socrates. Is it possible? It seemed to me in my time that things were already in a very bad way. I thought they must ultimately work into a more reasonable course, and that mankind would profit by so many years of experiment.

Montaigne. Do men ever experiment? They are like birds, caught always in the very same snares wherein have been taken a hundred thousand more of their species. There is no one who does not enter life wholly new, the stupidities of the fathers are not the least use to their children.

Socrates. What! no experiments? I thought the world might have an old age less foolish and unruled than its youth.

Montaigne. Men of all time are moved by the same inclinations, over which reason is powerless. Where there are men there are follies, the same ones.

Socrates. In that case why do you think that antiquity was better than to-day?

Montaigne. Ah, Socrates, I knew you had a peculiar manner of reasoning and of catching your collocutors in arguments whereof they had not foreseen the conclusions, and that you led them whither you would, and that you called yourself the midwife of their thoughts conducting accouchement. I confess that I am brought to bed of a proposition contrary to what I proposed, but still I will not give in. Certain it is that we no longer

find the firm and vigorous souls of antiquity, of Aristides, of Phocion, of Pericles, or, indeed, of Socrates.

Socrates. Why not? Is nature exhausted that she should have no longer the power of producing great souls? And why should she be exhausted of nothing save reasonable men? Not one of her works has degenerated; why should there be nothing save mankind which degenerates?

Montaigne. It's flat fact: man degenerates. It seems that in old time nature showed us certain great patterns of men in order to persuade us that she could have made more had she wished, and that she had been negligent making the rest.

Socrates. Be on your guard in one thing. Antiquity is very peculiar, it is the sole thing of its species: distance enlarges it. Had you known Aristides, Phocion, Pericles and me, since you wish to add me to the number, you would have found men of your time to resemble us. We are predisposed to antiquity because we dislike our own age, thus antiquity profits. Man elevates the men of old time in order to abase his contemporaries. When we lived we overestimated our forebears, and now our posterity esteems us more than our due, and quite rightly. I think the world would be very tedious if one saw it with perfect precision, for it is always the same.

Montaigne. I should have thought that it was all in movement, that everything changed; that different ages had different characteristics, like men. Surely one sees learned ages, and ignorant, simple ages and ages greatly refined? One sees ages serious, and trifling ages, ages polite, ages boorish?

Socrates. True.

Montaigne. Why then are not some ages more virtuous, others more evil?

Socrates. That does not follow. Clothes change, but that does not mean a change in the shape of the body. Politeness or grossness, knowledge or ignorance, a higher or lower degree of simplicity, a spirit serious or of roguery, these are but the outside of a man, all this changes, but the heart does not change, and man is all in the heart. One is ignorant in one age, but a fashion of knowledge may come, one is anxious for one's own advantage but a fashion for being unselfish will not come to replace this. Out of the prodigious number of unreasonable men born in each era, nature makes two or three dozen with reason, she must scatter them wide over the earth, and you can well guess that there are never enough of them found in one spot to set up a fashion of virtue and rightness.

Montaigne. But is this scattering evenly done? Some ages might fare better than others.

Socrates. At most an imperceptible inequality. The general order of nature would seem to be rather constant.

VI

CHARLES V AND ERASMUS

Erasmus. Be in no uncertainty, if there are ranks among the dead, I shall not cede you precedence.

Charles. A grammarian! A mere savant, or to push your claims to extremes, a man of wit, who would carry it off over a prince who has been master of the best half of Europe!

Erasmus. Add also America, and I am not the least more alarmed. Your greatness was a mere conglomeration of chances, as one, who should sort out all its parts, would make you see clearly. If your grandfather Ferdinand had been a man of his word, you would have had next to nothing in Italy; if other princes had had sense enough to believe in antipodes, Columbus would not have come to him, and America would not have been beneath your dominion; if, after the death of the last Duke of Burgundy, Louis XI had well considered his actions, the heiress of Burgundy would not have married Maximilian, or the Low Countries descended to you; if Henry of Castile, the brother of your grandmother Isabel, had not had a bad name among women, or if his wife had been of an unsuspectable virtue, Henry's daughter would have passed for his daughter and the kingdom of Castile have escaped you.

Charles. You alarm me. At this late hour I am to lose Castile, or the Low Lands, or America, or Italy, one or the other.

Erasmus. You need not laugh. There could not have been a little good sense in one place, or a little good faith in another without its costing you dearly. There was nothing—to your great-uncle's impotence; to the inconstancy of your great-aunt—that you could have done without. How delicate is that edifice whose foundation is such a collection of hazards.

Charles. There is no way of bearing so strict an examination as yours. I confess that you sweep away all my greatness and all my titles.

Erasmus. They were the adornments whereof you boasted, and I have swept them away without trouble. Do you remember having heard said that the Athenian Cimon, having taken prisoner a great number of Persians, put up their clothing and their naked bodies for sale, and since the clothes were greatly magnificent there was great concourse to buy them, but no one would bid for the men? Faith, I think what befell the Persians would happen to a good number of others if one detached their personal merit from that which fortune has given them.

Charles. What is personal merit?

Erasmus. Need one ask that? Everything that is in us, our mind, for example, our knowledge.

Charles. And can one reasonably boast of these things?

Erasmus. Certainly. These are not gifts of chance like high birth and riches.

Charles. You surprise me. Does not knowledge come to the savant as wealth comes to most who have it? Is it not by way of inheritance? You receive from the ancients, as we receive from our fathers. If we have been left all we possess, you have been left all that you know, and on this account many scholars regard what

they have from the ancients with such respect as certain men show their ancestral lands and houses, wherein they would hate to have anything changed.

Erasmus. The great are born heirs of their father's greatness, but the learned are not born inheritors of the ancient learning. Knowledge is not an entail received, it is an wholly new acquisition made by personal effort, or if it is an entail it is so difficult to receive as to be worthy of honour.

Charles. Very well. Set the trouble of acquiring mental possessions against that of preserving the goods of fortune, the two things are quite equal; for if difficulty is all that you prize, there is as much in worldly affairs as in the philosopher's study.

Erasmus. Then set knowledge aside and confine ourselves to the mind, that at least does not depend upon fortune.

Charles. Does not depend? The mind consists of a certain formation of cerebrum, is there less luck in being born with a respectable cerebrum than being born son to a king? You were a man of great genius; but ask all the philosophers why you weren't stupid and log-headed; it depended on next to nothing, on a mere disposition of fibres so fine that the most delicate operation of anatomy cannot find it. And after knowing all this, the fine wits still dare to tell us that they alone are free from the dominion of chance, and think themselves at liberty to despise the rest of mankind.

Erasmus. You argue that it is as creditable to be rich as to show fine intelligence.

Charles. To have fine intelligence is merely a luckier chance, but chance it all is at the bottom.

Erasmus. You mean that all is chance?

Charles. Yes, provided we give that name to an order

we do not understand. I leave you to decide whether I have not plucked men cleaner than you have; you merely strip from them certain advantages of birth, I take even those of their understanding. If before being vain of a thing they should try to assure themselves that it really belonged to them, there would be little vanity left in the world.

VII

AGNES SOREL—ROXELANE

Agnes. To tell you the truth, I don't understand your Turkish gallantry. The beauties of the seraglio have a lover who has only to say: I want it. They never enjoy the pleasures of resistance, and they cannot provide the pleasures of victory, all the delights of love are thus lost to sultans and sultanas.

Roxelane. How would you arrange it? The Turkish emperors being extremely jealous of their authority have set aside these refinements of dalliance. They are afraid that pretty women, not wholly dependent upon them, would usurp too great a sway over their minds, and meddle too greatly in public affairs.

Agnes. Very well! How do they know whether that would be a misfortune? Love has a number of uses, and I who speak to you, had I not been mistress to a French King, and if I had not had great power over him, I do not know where France would be at this hour. Have you heard tell how desperate were our affairs under Charles VII; to what state the kingdom was reduced, with the English masters of nearly the whole of it?

Roxelane. Yes, as the affair made a great stir, I know that a certain virgin saved France. And you were then this girl, La Pucelle? But how in that case were you at the same time the king's mistress?

Agnes. You are wrong. I have nothing in common with the virgin of whom you speak. The king by whom I was loved wished to abandon his kingdom to foreign usurpers, he went to hide in a mountainous region, where it would have been by no means too comfortable for me to have followed him. I contrived to upset this plan. I called an astrologer with whom I had a private agreement, and after he had pretended to scan my nativity, he told me one day in Charles's presence that if all the stars were not liars I should be a king's mistress, and loved with a long-lasting passion. I said at once: "You will not mind, Sire, if I leave for the English Court, for you do not wish to be king, and have not yet loved me long enough for my destiny to be fulfilled." The fear which he had of losing me made him resolve to be king, and he began from that time to strengthen his kingdom. You see what France owes to love, and how gallant she should be, if only from recognition.

Roxelane. It is true, but returning to La Pucelle. What was her part? Was history wrong in attributing to a young peasant girl what truly belonged to a court lady and a king's mistress?

Agnes. Were history wrong on this point, it were no great wonder. However, it is true that La Pucelle greatly stirred up the soldiers, but I before that had animated the king. She was a great aid to this monarch, whom she found armed against the English, but without me she would not have found him so armed. And you will no longer doubt my part in this great affair when you hear the witness which one of Charles VII's successors has borne to me in this quatrain:

> "Agnes Sorel, more honour have you won in the good cause, our France, her restoration, than e'er

was got by prayer and close cloistration of pious eremite or devout nun.'' [1]

What do you say to it, Roxelane? Will you confess that if I had been a sultana like you, and had I not had the right to threaten Charles VII as I did, he would have lost his all?

Roxelane. I am surprised that you should be so vain of so slight an action. You had no difficulty in gaining great power over the mind of your lover, you who were free and mistress of yourself, but I, slave as I was, subjugated the sultan. You made Charles VII king, almost in spite of himself, but I made Soliman my husband despite his position.

Agnes. What! They say the sultans never marry.

Roxelane. I agree, and still I made up my mind to marry Soliman, although I could not lead him into marriage by the hope of anything he did not already possess. You shall hear a finer scheme than your own. I began to build temples, and to do many deeds of piety. Then I appeared very sorrowful. The sultan asked me the reason over and over again, and after the necessary preliminaries and crochets, I told him that I was melancholy because my good deeds, as I heard from our learned men, would bring me no reward, seeing that I was merely a slave, and worked only for Soliman, my master. Soliman thereupon freed me, in order that I might reap the reward of my virtuous actions, then when he wished to cohabit with me and to treat me like a bride of the harem, I appeared greatly surprised. I told him with great gravity that he had no rights over the body of a free woman. Soliman had a delicate conscience: he went to consult a doctor of laws with whom I had a certain

[1] François Premier.

agreement. His reply was that the sultan should abstain, as I was no longer his slave, and that unless he espoused me, he could not rightly take me for his. He fell deeper in love than ever. He had only one course to follow, but it was a very extraordinary course, and even dangerous, because of its novelty; however, he took it and married me.

Agnes. I confess that it is fine to subject those who stand so on their guard 'gainst our empery.

Roxelane. Men strive in vain, when we lay hold of them by their passions we lead them whither we will. If they would let me live again, and give me the most imperious man in the world, I would make of him whatever I chose, provided only that I had of wit much, of beauty sufficient, and of love only a little.

VIII

BRUTUS AND FAUSTINA

Brutus. What! Is it possible that you took pleasure in your thousand infidelities to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, the most affable husband, and without doubt the best man in Roman dominions?

Faustina. And is it possible that you assassinated Julius Cæsar, that so mild and moderate emperor?

Brutus. I wished to terrify all usurpers by the example of Cæsar, whose very mildness and moderation were no guarantee of security.

Faustina. And if I should tell you that I wished to terrify likewise all husbands, so that no man should dare to be a husband after the example I made of Aurelius, whose indulgence was so ill requited?

Brutus. A fine scheme! We must, however, have husbands or who would govern the women? But Rome had no need to be governed by Cæsar.

Faustina. Who told you that? Rome had begun to have madcap crochets as humorous and fantastical as those which are laid to most women's credit, she could no longer dispense with a master, and yet she was ill-pleased to find one. Women are of the identical character, and we may equally agree that men are too jealous of their domination, they exercise it in marriage and that is a great beginning, but they wish to extend it to love. When they ask that a mistress be faithful, by faithful they mean submissive. The rule should be

equally shared between lover and mistress, however it always shifts to one side or the other, almost always to that of the lover.

Brutus. You are in a strange revolt against men.

Faustina. I am a Roman, and I have a Roman feeling for liberty.

Brutus. The world is quite full of such Romans, but Romans of my type are, you will confess, much more rare.

Faustina. It is a very good thing that they are. I do not think that any honest man would behave as you did, or assassinate his benefactor.

Brutus. I think there are equally few honest women who would have copied your conduct, as for mine, you must admit it showed firmness. It needed a deal of courage not to be affected by Cæsar's feeling of friendship.

Faustina. Do you think it needed less vigour to hold out against the gentleness and patience of Marcus Aurelius? He looked on all my infidelities with indifference; he would not do me honour by jealousy, he took away from me the joys of deceiving him. I was so greatly enraged at it, that I sometimes wished to turn pious. However, I did not sink to that weakness, and after my death even, did not Marcus Aurelius do me the despite of building me temples, of giving me priests, and of setting up in my honour what is called the Faustinian festival? Would it not drive one to fury? To have given me a gorgeous apotheosis!—to have exalted me as a goddess!

Brutus. I confess I no longer understand women. These are the oddest complaints in the world.

Faustina. Would you not rather have plotted against Sylla than Cæsar? Sylla would have stirred your indignation and hate by his excess of cruelty. I should

greatly have preferred to hoodwink a jealous man, even Cæsar, for example, of whom we are speaking. He had insupportable vanity, he wished to have the empire of the world all to himself, and his wife all to himself, and because he saw Clodius sharing one and Pompey the other, he could bear neither Pompey nor Clodius. I should have been happy with Cæsar!

Brutus. One moment and you wish to do away with all husbands, in the next you sigh for the worst.

Faustina. I could wish there were none in order that women might ever be free, but if there are to be husbands, the most crabbed would please me most, for the sheer pleasure of gaining my liberty.

Brutus. I think for women of your temperament it is much better that there should be husbands. The more keen the desire for liberty, the more malignity there is in it.

IX

HELEN AND FULVIA

Helen. I must hear your side of a story which Augustus told me a little while ago. Is it true, Fulvia, that you looked on him with some favour, but that, when he did not respond, you stirred up your husband, Mark Antony, to make war upon him?

Fulvia. Very true, my dear Helen, and now that we are all ghosts there can be no harm in confessing it. Mark Antony was daft over the comedienne Citherida, I would have been glad to avenge myself by a love affair with Augustus; but Augustus was fussy about his mistresses, he found me neither young enough nor sufficiently pretty, and though I showed him quite clearly that he was undertaking a civil war through default of a few attentions to me, it was impossible to make him agreeable. I will even recite to you, if you like, some verses which he made of the matter, although they are not the least complimentary:

Because Mark Antony is charmed with the Glaphira,
[It was by that name that he called Citherida.]
Fulvia wants to break me with her eyes,
Her Antony is faithless, what? Who cries:
Augustus pays Mark's debts, or he must fear her.
Must I, Augustus, come when Fulvia calls
Merely because she wants me?
At that rate, I'd have on my back

A thousand wives unsatisfied.
Love me, she says, or fight. The fates declare:
She is too ugly. Let the trumpets blare.

Helen. You and I, then, between us have caused the two greatest wars on record?

Fulvia. With this difference: you caused the Trojan War by your beauty, I that of Antony and Augustus by the defect of that quality.

Helen. But still you have an advantage, your war was much more enjoyable. My husband avenged himself for an insult done him by loving me, which is quite common, yours avenged himself because a certain man had not loved you, and this is not ordinary at all.

Fulvia. Yes, but Antony didn't know that he was making his war on my account, while Menelaus knew quite well that his was on your account. That is what no one can pardon him. For Menelaus with all the Greeks behind him besieged Troy for ten years to tear you from Paris' arms yet if Paris had insisted on giving you up, would not Menelaus, instead of all this, have had to stand ten years siege in Sparta to keep from taking you back? Frankly I think your Trojans and Greeks deficient in humour, half of them silly to want you returned, the other half still more silly to keep you. Why should so many honest folk be immolated to the pleasures of one young man who was ignorant of what he was doing? I cannot help smiling at that passage in Homer where after nine years of war wherein one had just lost so many people, he assembles a council before Priam's palace. Antenor thinks they should surrender you, I should have thought there was scant cause for hesitation, save that one might have regretted not having thought of this expedient long before. How-

ever Paris bears witness that he mislikes the proposal, and Priam, who was, as Homer tells us, peer to the gods in wisdom, being embarrassed to see his Cabinet divided on such a delicate matter, not knowing which side to choose, orders every one to go home to supper.

Helen. The Trojan War has at least this in its favour, its ridiculous features are quite apparent, but the war between Augustus and Antony did not show its reality. When one saw so great a number of Imperial eagles surging about the land, no one thought of supposing that the cause of their mutual animosity was Augustus' refusal to you of his favours.

Fulvia. So it goes, we see men in great commotions, but the sources and springs are for the most part quite trivial and ridiculous. It is important for the glory of great events that their true causes be hidden.

X

SENECA AND SCARRON

Seneca. You fill full my cup of joy, telling me that the stoics endure to this day and that in these latter ages you professedly held their doctrine.

Scarron. I was, without vanity, more of a stoic than you were, or than was Chrysippus, or Zeno, your founder. You were all in a position to philosophize at your ease. You yourself had immense possessions. The rest were either men of property or endowed with excellent health, or at least they had all their limbs. They came and went in the ordinary manner of men. But I was the shuttle of ill-fortune; misshapen, in a form scarcely human, immobile, bound to one spot like a tree, I suffered continually, and I showed that these evils are limited by the body but can never reach the soul of a sage. Grief suffered always the shame of not being able to enter my house save by a restricted number of doors.

Seneca. I am delighted to hear you speak thus. By your words alone I recognize you for a great stoic. Were you not your age's admiration?

Scarron. I was. I was not content to suffer my pangs with patience, I insulted them by my mockery. Steadiness would have honoured another, but I attained gaiety.

Seneca. O stoic wisdom! You are, then, no chimera, as is the common opinion! You are, in truth, among men, and here is a wise man whom you have made no less happy than Zeus. Come, sir, I must lead you to Zeno

and the rest of our stoics; I want them to see the fruit of their admirable lessons to mankind.

Scarron. You will greatly oblige me by introducing me to such illustrious shades.

Seneca. By what name must they know you?

Scarron. Scarron is the name.

Seneca. Scarron? The name is known to me. Have I not heard several moderns, who are here, speak of you?

Scarron. Possibly.

Seneca. Did you not write a great mass of humorous and ridiculous verses?

Scarron. Yes. I even invented a sort of poetry which they call the burlesque. It goes the limit in merriment.

Seneca. But you were not then a philosopher?

Scarron. Why not?

Seneca. It is not a stoic's business to write ludicrous books and to try to be mirth-provoking.

Scarron. Oh! I see that you do not understand the perfections of humour. All wisdom is in it. One can draw ridicule out of anything; I could even get it out of your books, if I wished to, and without any trouble at all: yet all things will not give birth to the serious, and I defy you to put my works to any purpose save that for which they were made. Would not this tend to show that mirth rules over all things, and that the world's affairs are not made for serious treatment? I have turned your Virgil's sacred *Æneid* into burlesque, and there is no better way to show that the magnificent and the ludicrous are near neighbours, with hardly a fence between them. All things are like these *tours de force* of perspective where a number of separate faces make, for example, an emperor if viewed from a par-

ticular angle; change the view-point and the figure formed is a scoundrel's.

Seneca. I am sorry that people did not understand that your frivolous verses were made to induce such profound reflections. Men would have respected you more than they did had they known you for so great a philosopher; but it was impossible to guess this from the plays you gave to the public.

Scarron. If I had written fat books to prove that poverty and sickness should have no effect on the gaiety of the sage, they would have been perhaps worthy of a stoic?

Seneca. Most assuredly.

Scarron. And I wrote heaven knows how many books which prove that in spite of poverty, in spite of infirmity, I was possessed of this gaiety; is not this better? Your treatises upon morals are but speculations on wisdom, my verses a continual practice.

Seneca. Your pretended wisdom was not a result of your reason, but merely of temperament.

Scarron. The best sort of wisdom in the world.

Seneca. They are droll wiseacres indeed who are temperamentally wise. Is it the least to their credit that they are not stark raving? The happiness of being virtuous may come sometimes from nature, but the merit of being wise can never come but from reason.

Scarron. People scarcely pay any attention to what you call a merit, for if we see that some man has a virtue, and we can make out that it is not his by nature, we rate it at next to nothing. It would seem, however, that being acquired by so much trouble, we should the more esteem it: no matter, it is a mere result of the reason and inspires no confidence.

Seneca. One should rely even less on the inequality

of temperament in your wise men, who are wise only as their blood pleases. One must know how the interiors of their bodies are disposed ere one can gauge the reach of their virtue. Is it not incomparably finer to be led only by reason; to make oneself independent of nature, so that one need fear no surprises?

Scarron. That were better if it were possible; but, unfortunately, Nature keeps perpetual guard on her rights. Her rights are initial movements, and no one can wrest them from her. Men are often well under way ere reason is warned or awakened, and when she is ready to act she finds things in great disorder, and it is, even then, doubtful if she can do aught to help matters. No, I am by no means surprised to see so many folk resting but incomplete faith upon reason.

Seneca. Hers alone is the government of men and the ruling of all this universe.

Scarron. Yet she seldom manages to maintain her authority. I have heard that some hundred years after your death a platonic philosopher asked the reigning emperor for a little town in Calabria. It was wholly ruined. He wished to rebuild it and to police it according to the rules of Plato's *Republic,* and to rename it Platonopolis. But the emperor refused the philosopher, having so little trust in divine Plato's reason that he was unwilling to risk to it the rule of a dump-heap. You see thereby how Reason has ruined her credit. If she were in any way estimable, men would be the only creatures who could esteem her, and men do not esteem her at all.

XI

STRATO, RAPHAEL OF URBINO

Strato. I did not expect that the advice I gave to my slave would have such happy effects, yet in the world above it saved me my life and my kingdom altogether, and here it has won me the admiration of all the sages.

Raphael. What advice did you give?

Strato. I was at Tyre. All the slaves revolted and butchered their masters, yet one of mine was humane enough to spare me, and to hide me from the fury of the rest. They agreed to choose for their king the man who, upon a set day, should see the sun rise before any one else. They gathered in the plain, the whole multitude gluing their eyes to the eastern heaven, where the sun is wont to arise; my slave alone, in accordance with my instructions, kept his eyes toward the west. You may well believe that the others thought him a fool. However, by turning his back on them he saw the first rays of the sun which caught on a lofty tower, while his fellows still sought the sun's body in the east. They admired the subtlety of his mind, but he confessed that it was my due and that I was still among the living. They elected me king as a man descended of gods.

Raphael. I see that your advice was quite useful yet do not find it a subject for wonder.

Strato. All our philosophers here will explain to you that I taught my slave that the wise should ever turn their backs on the mob, and that the general opinion is usually sound if you take it to mean its own opposite.

Raphael. These philosophers talk like philosophers. It is their business to scoff at common opinion and prejudice; yet there is nothing more convenient or useful than are these latter.

Strato. From the manner in which you speak, one sees that you had no difficulty in complying with them.

Raphael. I assure you that my defence of prejudice is disinterested, and that by taking prejudice's part I laid myself open to no small ridicule. They were searching the Roman ruins for statues and as I was a good sculptor and painter they chose me to judge which were antique. Michael Angelo, my competitor, made in secret a perfect statue of Bacchus. He broke off one of the fingers, then hid the statue in a place where he knew we would dig. I declared it antique when we found it. He said it was modern. I based my opinion chiefly on the beauty of the work which, according to our rules, was well worthy of Grecian carvers. Irritated at contradiction I carried the matter further, and said it had been done in the time of Polycletus or Phidias. Then Michael Angelo brought out the broken irrefutable finger. I was greatly mocked for my prejudice, but what would I have done without prejudice? I was judge, and as judge one must make decisions.

Strato. You would have decided according to reason.

Raphael. Does reason ever decide? I should never have known by any process of reason to what age the statue belonged, I should have seen only its excellent beauty, then prejudice came to my aid, saying that a beautiful statue was ancient, or should be. With such a decision I judged.

Strato. It may well be that reason has no incontestable formulæ for things of such slight importance; but upon all questions of human conduct she has deci-

sions quite sure. Unfortunately men do not consult them.

Raphael. Let us then consult her on some point and see if she will decide it. Ask her if we should weep or laugh at the death of our friends and relations. On one side she will say, "they are lost to you, therefore weep." On the other, "they are delivered from the miseries of this life, you should therefore be joyful." In the face of such answers from reason, we act as local custom decrees. We weep at her bidding, and we weep so thoroughly that we cannot conceive laughter as possible; or we laugh so thoroughly that tears seem out of the question.

Strato. Reason is not always so undecided. She allows custom to decide such matters as are not worth her attention, but think how many very considerable things there are upon which she has clear-cut ideas, and from which she draws consequences equally clear.

Raphael. Unless I am much mistaken there are very few of these clear ideas.

Strato. No matter, they alone are worthy of absolute trust.

Raphael. That cannot be, for reason offers us a very small number of set maxims, and our mind is so made as to believe in many more. The overplus of one's inclination to believe in something or other all counts on the side of prejudice, and false opinions fill up the void.

Strato. But what need to cast oneself into error? Cannot one keep one's judgment suspended, in these unprovable matters? Reason stops when she knows not which way to turn.

Raphael. Very true, she has no other secret means of keeping herself from mistakes, save that of standing stock-still; but such a condition does violence to man's

mind, the human mind is in movement, and it must continue to move. It is not every man who can doubt; we have need of illumination to attain this faculty, we have need of strength to continue it. Moreover doubt is without action and among mankind we must act.

Strato. Thus one should preserve the prejudices of custom in order to act like the next man, but destroy the habits of thought in order to think like the sage.

Raphael. Better preserve them all. You seem to forget the old Samnite's answer when his compatriots sent to ask him what should be done with the Roman army which they had caught in the Caudine forks. The old man replied that they should put them all to the sword. The Samnites thought this too cruel; he then said they should let them go free and unscathed, and in the end they did neither, and reaped the evil result. It is the same with prejudices, we must either keep the whole lot or crush them out altogether, otherwise those you have eliminated will make you mistrust those which remain. The unhappiness of being deceived in many things will not be balanced by the pleasure of its being an unconscious deceit, and you will have neither the illumination of truth nor yet the comfort of error.

Strato. If there were no means of escaping your alternative, one should not long hesitate about taking a side. We should root out all prejudice.

Raphael. But reason would hunt out all our old notions and leave nothing else in their place. She would create a species of vacuum. And how could one bear this? No, no, considering how slight an amount of reason inheres in all men, we must leave them the prejudices to which they are so well acclimatized. These prejudices are reason's supplement. All that is lacking on one side can be got out of the other.

XII

BOMBASTES PARACELSUS AND MOLIÈRE

Molière. I should be delighted with you, if only because of your name, Paracelsus. One would have thought you some Greek or Roman, and never have suspected that Paracelsus was an Helvetian philosopher.

Paracelsus. I have made my name as illustrious as it is lovely. My works are a great aid to those who would pierce nature's secrets and more especially to those who launch out into the knowledge of genii and elementals.

Molière. I can readily believe that such is the true realm of science. To know men, whom one sees every day, is nothing; but to know the invisible genii is quite another affair.

Paracelsus. Doubtless. I have given precise information as to their nature, employments, and inclinations, as to their different orders, and their potencies throughout the cosmos.

Molière. How happy you were to be possessed of this knowledge, for before this you must have known man so precisely, yet many men have not attained even this.

Paracelsus. Oh, there is no philosopher so inconsiderable as not to have done so.

Molière. I suppose so. And you yourself have no indecisions regarding the nature of the soul, or its functions, or the nature of its bonds with the body?

Paracelsus. Frankly, it's impossible that there should not always remain some uncertainties on these subjects,

but we know as much of them as philosophy is able to learn.

Molière. And you yourself know no more?

Paracelsus. No. Isn't that quite enough?

Molière. Enough? It is nothing at all. You mean that you have leapt over men whom you do not understand, in order to come upon genii?

Paracelsus. Genii are much more stimulatory to our natural curiosity.

Molière. Yes, but it is unpardonable to speculate about them before one has completed one's knowledge of men. One would think the human mind wholly exhausted, when one sees men taking as objects of knowledge things which have perhaps no reality, and when one sees how gaily they do this. However, it is certain that there are enough very real objects to keep one wholly employed.

Paracelsus. The human mind naturally neglects the sciences which are too simple, and runs after those more mysterious. It is only upon these last that it can expend all its activity.

Molière. So much the worse for the mind; what you say is not at all to its credit. The truth presents itself, but being too simple it passes unrecognized, and ridiculous mysteries are received only because of their mystery. I believe that if most men saw the universe as it is, seeing there neither "*virtues*" nor "numbers," nor "properties" of the planets, nor fatalities tied to certain times and revolutions, they could not help saying of its admirable arrangement: "What, is that all there is to it?"

Paracelsus. You call these mysteries ridiculous, because you have not been able to reach into them, they are truly reserved for the great.

Molière. I esteem those who do not understand these mysteries quite as much as those who do understand them; unfortunately nature has not made every one incapable of such understanding.

Paracelsus. But you who seem so didactic, what profession did you follow on earth?

Molière. A profession quite different from yours. You studied the powers of genii, I studied the follies of men.

Paracelsus. A fine subject. Do we not know well enough that men are subject to plenty of follies?

Molière. We know it in the gross, and confusedly; but we must come to details, and then we can understand the scope and extent of this science.

Paracelsus. Well, what use did you make of it?

Molière. I gathered in a particular place the greatest possible number of people and then showed them that they were all fools.

Paracelsus. It must have needed a terrible speech to get that plain fact into their heads.

Molière. Nothing is easier. One proves them their silliness without using much eloquence, or much premeditated reasoning. Their acts are so ludicrous that if you but show like acts before them, you overwhelm them with their own laughter.

Paracelsus. I understand you, you were a comedian. For myself I cannot conceive how one can get any pleasure from comedy; one goes to laugh at a representation of customs, why should one not laugh at the customs themselves?

Molière. In order to laugh at the world's affairs one must in some fashion stand apart, or outside them. Comedy takes you outside them, she shows them to you as a pageant in which you yourself have no part.

Paracelsus. But does not a man go straight back to that which he has so recently mocked, and take his wonted place in it?

Molière. No doubt. The other day, to amuse myself, I made a fable on this same subject. A young gosling flew with the usual clumsiness of his species, and during his momentary flight, which scarcely lifted him from the earth, he insulted the rest of the barnyard: "Unfortunate animals, I see you beneath me, you cannot thus cleave the æther." It was a very short mockery, the gosling fell with the words.

Paracelsus. What use then are the reflections of comedy, since they are like the flight of your gosling, and since one falls back at once into the communal silliness?

Molière. It is much to have laughed at oneself; nature has given us that marvellous faculty lest we make dupes of ourselves. How often, when half of our being is doing something with enthusiasm, does the other half stand aside laughing? And if need were we might find a third part to make mock of both of the others. You might say that man was made of inlays.

Paracelsus. I cannot see that there is much in all this to occupy one's attention. A few banal reflections, a few jests of scanty foundation deserve but little esteem, but what efforts of meditation may we not need to treat of more lofty matters?

Molière. You are coming back to your genii, I recognize only fools. However, although I have never worked upon subjects save those which lie before all men's eyes, I can predict that my comedies will outlast your exalted productions. Everything is subject to the changes of fashion, the labours of the mind are not exempt from this destiny of doublets and breeches. I have seen, lord knows how many, books and fashions of writing interred

with their authors, very much in the manner that certain races bury a man with his most valued belongings. I know perfectly well that there may be revolutions in the kingdom of letters, and, with all that, I guarantee that my writings will endure. And I know why, for he who would paint for immortality must paint fools.

FONTENELLE'S TRANSLATION FROM HADRIEN

Ma petite âme, ma mignonne,
Tu t'en vas donc, ma fille, et Dieu sçache où tu vas;
Tu pars seulette, nuê, et tremblotante, Helas!
Que deviendra ton humeur folichone?
Que deviendront tant de jolis ébats?

DIVISIONS

A RETROSPECT

THERE has been so much scribbling about a new fashion in poetry, that I may perhaps be pardoned this brief recapitulation and retrospect.

In the spring or early summer of 1912, "H. D.," Richard Aldington and myself decided that we were agreed upon the three principles following:

1. Direct treatment of the "thing" whether subjective or objective.

2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.

3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome.

Upon many points of taste and of predilection we differed, but agreeing upon these three positions we thought we had as much right to a group name, at least as much right, as a number of French "schools" proclaimed by Mr. Flint in the August number of Harold Munro's magazine for 1911.

This school has since been "joined" or "followed" by numerous people who, whatever their merits, do not show any signs of agreeing with the second specification. Indeed vers libre has become as prolix and as verbose as any of the flaccid varieties that preceded it. It has brought faults of its own. The actual language and phrasing is often as bad as that of our elders without even the excuse that the words are shoveled in to fill a metric pattern or to complete the noise of a rhyme-sound. Whether or no the phrases followed by the fol-

lowers are musical must be left to the reader's decision. At times I can find a marked metre in "vers libres," as stale and hackneyed as any pseudo-Swinburnian, at times the writers seem to follow no musical structure whatever. But it is, on the whole, good that the field should be ploughed. Perhaps a few good poems have come from the new method, and if so it is justified.

. . .

Criticism is not a circumscription or a set of prohibitions. It provides fixed points of departure. It may startle a dull reader into alertness. That little of it which is good is mostly in stray phrases; or if it be an older artist helping a younger it is in great measure but rules of thumb, cautions gained by experience.

I set together a few phrases on practical working about the time the first remarks on imagisme were published. The first use of the word "Imagiste" was in my note to T. E. Hulme's five poems, printed at the end of my "Ripostes" in the autumn of 1912. I reprint my cautions from *Poetry* for March, 1913.

A FEW DON'TS

An "Image" is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time. I use the term "complex" rather in the technical sense employed by the newer psychologists, such as Hart, though we might not agree absolutely in our application.

It is the presentation of such a "complex" instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art.

It is better to present one Image in a lifetime than to produce voluminous works.

All this, however, some may consider open to debate. The immediate necessity is to tabulate A LIST OF DON'TS for those beginning to write verses. I can not put all of them into Mosaic negative.

To begin with, consider the three propositions (demanding direct treatment, economy of words, and the sequence of the musical phrase), not as dogma—never consider anything as dogma—but as the result of long contemplation, which, even if it is some one else's contemplation, may be worth consideration.

Pay no attention to the criticism of men who have never themselves written a notable work. Consider the discrepancies between the actual writing of the Greek poets and dramatists, and the theories of the Graeco-Roman grammarians, concocted to explain their metres.

LANGUAGE

Use no superfluous word, no adjective, which does not reveal something.

Don't use such an expression as "dim lands *of peace.*" It dulls the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete. It comes from the writer's not realizing that the natural object is always the *adequate* symbol.

Go in fear of abstractions. Do not retell in mediocre verse what has already been done in good prose. Don't think any intelligent person is going to be deceived when you try to shirk all the difficulties of the unspeakably difficult art of good prose by chopping your composition into line lengths.

What the expert is tired of today the public will be tired of tomorrow.

Don't imagine that the art of poetry is any simpler

than the art of music, or that you can please the expert before you have spent at least as much effort on the art of verse as the average piano teacher spends on the art of music.

Be influenced by as many great artists as you can, but have the decency either to acknowledge the debt outright, or to try to conceal it.

Don't allow "influence" to mean merely that you mop up the particular decorative vocabulary of some one or two poets whom you happen to admire. A Turkish war correspondent was recently caught red-handed babbling in his dispatches of "dove-gray" hills, or else it was "pearl-pale," I can not remember.

Use either no ornament or good ornament.

RHYTHM AND RHYME

Let the candidate fill his mind with the finest cadences he can discover, preferably in a foreign language [1] so that the meaning of the words may be less likely to divert his attention from the movement; e.g., Saxon charms, Hebridean Folk Songs, the verse of Dante, and the lyrics of Shakespeare—if he can dissociate the vocabulary from the cadence. Let him dissect the lyrics of Goethe coldly into their component sound values, syllables long and short, stressed and unstressed, into vowels and consonants.

It is not necessary that a poem should rely on its music, but if it does rely on its music that music must be such as will delight the expert.

Let the neophyte know assonance and alliteration, rhyme immediate and delayed, simple and polyphonic,

[1] This is for rhythm, his vocabulary must of course be found in his native tongue.

as a musician would expect to know harmony and counterpoint and all the minutiae of his craft. No time is too great to give to these matters or to any one of them, even if the artist seldom have need of them.

Don't imagine that a thing will "go" in verse just because it's too dull to go in prose.

Don't be "viewy"—leave that to the writers of pretty little philosophic essays. Don't be descriptive; remember that the painter can describe a landscape much better than you can, and that he has to know a deal more about it.

When Shakespeare talks of the "Dawn in russet mantle clad" he presents something which the painter does not present. There is in this line of his nothing that one can call description; he presents.

Consider the way of the scientists rather than the way of an advertising agent for a new soap.

The scientist does not expect to be acclaimed as a great scientist until he has *discovered* something. He begins by learning what has been discovered already. He goes from that point onward. He does not bank on being a charming fellow personally. He does not expect his friends to applaud the results of his freshman class work. Freshmen in poetry are unfortunately not confined to a definite and recognizable class room. They are "all over the shop." Is it any wonder "the public is indifferent to poetry?"

Don't chop your stuff into separate *iambs*. Don't make each line stop dead at the end, and then begin every next line with a heave. Let the beginning of the next line catch the rise of the rhythm wave, unless you want a definite longish pause.

In short, behave as a musician, a good musician, when

dealing with that phase of your art which has exact parallels in music. The same laws govern, and you are bound by no others.

Naturally, your rhythmic structure should not destroy the shape of your words, or their natural sound, or their meaning. . It is improbable that, at the start, you will be able to get a rhythm-structure strong enough to affect them very much, though you may fall a victim to all sorts of false stopping due to line ends and cæsurae.

The musician can rely on pitch and the volume of the orchestra. You can not. The term harmony is misapplied to poetry; it refers to simultaneous sounds of different pitch. There is, however, in the best verse a sort of residue of sound which remains in the ear of the hearer and acts more or less as an organ-base.

A rhyme must have in it some slight element of surprise if it is to give pleasure; it need not be bizarre or curious, but it must be well used if used at all.

Vide further Vildrac and Duhamel's notes on rhyme in "Technique Poetique."

That part of your poetry which strikes upon the imaginative *eye* of the reader will lose nothing by translation into a foreign tongue; that which appeals to the ear can reach only those who take it in the original.

Consider the definiteness of Dante's presentation, as compared with Milton's rhetoric. Read as much of Wordsworth as does not seem too unutterably dull.[1]

If you want the gist of the matter go to Sappho, Catullus, Villon, Heine when he is in the vein, Gautier when he is not too frigid; or, if you have not the tongues, seek out the leisurely Chaucer. Good prose will do you no harm, and there is good discipline to be had by trying to write it.

[1] Vide infra.

Translation is likewise good training, if you find that your original matter "wobbles" when you try to rewrite it. The meaning of the poem to be translated can not "wobble."

If you are using a symmetrical form, don't put in what you want to say and then fill up the remaining vacuums with slush.

Don't mess up the perception of one sense by trying to define it in terms of another. This is usually only the result of being too lazy to find the exact word. To this clause there are possibly exceptions.

The first three simple proscriptions will throw out nine-tenths of all the bad poetry now accepted as standard and classic; and will prevent you from many a crime of production.

". . . *Mais d'abord il faut être un poète,*" as MM. Duhamel and Vildrac have said at the end of their little book, "Notes sur la Technique Poetique."

. . .

Since March, 1913, Ford Madox Hueffer has pointed out that Wordsworth was so intent on the ordinary or plain word that he never thought of hunting for *le mot juste.*

John Butler Yeats has handled or man-handled Wordsworth and the Victorians, and his criticism, contained in letters to his son, is now printed and available.

I do not like writing *about* art, my first, at least I think it was my first essay on the subject, was a protest against it.

[1] Page 000.

PROLEGOMENA[1]

Time was when the poet lay in a green field with his head against a tree and played his diversion on a ha'penny whistle, and Cæsar's predecessors conquered the earth, and the predecessors of golden Crassus embezzled, and fashions had their say, and let him alone. And presumably he was fairly content in this circumstance, for I have small doubt that the occasional passer-by, being attracted by curiosity to know why any one should lie under a tree and blow diversion on a ha'penny whistle, came and conversed with him, and that among these passers-by there was on occasion a person of charm or a young lady who had not read "Man and Superman"; and looking back upon this naïve state of affairs we call it the age of gold.

Metastasio, and he should know if any one, assures us that this age endures—even though the modern poet is expected to holloa his verses down a speaking tube to the editors of cheap magazines—S. S. McClure, or some one of that sort—even though hordes of authors meet in dreariness and drink healths to the "Copyright Bill"; even though these things be, the age of gold pertains. Imperceivably, if you like, but pertains. You meet unkempt Amyclas in a Soho restaurant and chant together of dead and forgotten things—it is a manner of speech among poets to chant of dead, half-forgotten things, there seems no special harm in it; it has always been done—and it's rather better to be a clerk in the Post Office than to look after a lot of stinking, verminous sheep—and at another hour of the day one substitutes the drawing-room for the restaurant and tea is prob-

[1] *Poetry and Drama* (then the *Poetry Review*, edited by Harold Monro), Feb., 1912.

ably more palatable than mead and mare's milk, and little cakes than honey. And in this fashion one survives the resignation of Mr. Balfour, and the iniquities of the American customs-house, *e quel bufera infernal,* the periodical press. And then in the middle of it, there being apparently no other person at once capable and available one is stopped and asked to explain oneself.

I begin on the chord thus querulous, for I would much rather lie on what is left of Catullus' parlour floor and speculate the azure beneath it and the hills off to Salo and Riva with their forgotten gods moving unhindered amongst them, than discuss any processes and theories of art whatsoever. I would rather play tennis. I shall not argue.

CREDO

Rhythm.—I believe in an "absolute rhythm," a rhythm, that is, in poetry which corresponds exactly to the emotion or shade of emotion to be expressed. A man's rhythm must be interpretative, it will be, therefore, in the end, his own, uncounterfeiting, uncounterfeitable.

Symbols.—I believe that the proper and perfect symbol is the natural object, that if a man use "symbols" he must so use them that their symbolic function does not obtrude; so that *a* sense, and the poetic quality of the passage, is not lost to those who do not understand the symbol as such, to whom, for instance, a hawk is a hawk.

Technique.—I believe in technique as the test of a man's sincerity; in law when it is ascertainable; in the trampling down of every convention that impedes or obscures the determination of the law, or the precise rendering of the impulse.

Form.—I think there is a "fluid" as well as a "solid"

content, that some poems may have form as a tree has form, some as water poured into a vase. That most symmetrical forms have certain uses. That a vast number of subjects cannot be precisely, and therefore not properly rendered in symmetrical forms.

"Thinking that alone worthy wherein the whole art is employed,"[1] I think the artist should master all known forms and systems of metric, and I have with some persistence set about doing this, searching particularly into those periods wherein the systems came to birth or attained their maturity. It has been complained, with some justice, that I dump my note-books on the public. I think that only after a long struggle will poetry attain such a degree of development, of, if you will, modernity, that it will vitally concern people who are accustomed, in prose, to Henry James and Anatole France, in music to Debussy. I am constantly contending that it took two centuries of Provençe and one of Tuscany to develop the media of Dante's masterwork, that it took the latinists of the Renaissance, and the Pleiade, and his own age of painted speech to prepare Shakespeare his tools. It is tremendously important that great poetry be written, it makes no jot of difference who writes it. The experimental demonstrations of one man may save the time of many—hence my furore over Arnaut Daniel—if a man's experiments try out one new rime, or dispense conclusively with one iota of currently accepted nonsense, he is merely playing fair with his colleagues when he chalks up his result.

No man ever writes very much poetry that "matters." In bulk, that is, no one produces much that is final, and when a man is not doing this highest thing, this saying

[1] Dante, De Volgari Eloquio.

the thing once for all and perfectly; when he is not matching Ποικιλόθρον', ἀθάνατ' Ἀφρόδιτα, or "Hist—said Kate the Queen," he had much better be making the sorts of experiment which may be of use to him in his later work, or to his successors.

"The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne." It is a foolish thing for a man to begin his work on a too narrow foundation, it is a disgraceful thing for a man's work not to show steady growth and increasing fineness from first to last.

As for "adaptations"; one finds that all the old masters of painting recommend to their pupils that they begin by copying masterwork, and proceed to their own composition.

As for "Every man his own poet." The more every man knows about poetry the better. I believe in every one writing poetry who wants to; most do. I believe in every man knowing enough of music to play "God bless our home" on the harmonicum, but I do not believe in every man giving concerts and printing his sin.

The mastery of any art is the work of a lifetime. I should not discriminate between the "amateur" and the "professional," or rather I should discriminate quite often in favour of the amateur, but I should discriminate between the amateur and the expert. It is certain that the present chaos will endure until the Art of poetry has been preached down the amateur gullet, until there is such a general understanding of the fact that poetry is an art and not a pastime; such a knowledge of technique; of technique of surface and technique of content, that the amateurs will cease to try to drown out the masters.

If a certain thing was said once for all in Atlantis

or Arcadia, in 450 Before Christ or in 1290 after, it is not for us moderns to go saying it over, or to go obscuring the memory of the dead by saying the same thing with less skill and less conviction.

My pawing over the ancients and semi-ancients has been one struggle to find out what has been done, once for all, better than it can ever be done again, and to find out what remains for us to do, and plenty does remain, for if we still feel the same emotions as those which launched the thousand ships, it is quite certain that we come on these feelings differently, through different nuances, by different intellectual gradations. Each age has its own abounding gifts, yet only some ages transmute them into matter of duration. No good poetry is ever written in a manner twenty years old, for to write in such a manner shows conclusively that the writer thinks from books, convention and *cliché*, and not from life, yet a man feeling the divorce of life and his art may naturally try to resurrect a forgotten mode if he find in that mode some leaven, or if he think he sees in it some element lacking in contemporary art which might unite that art again to its sustenance, life.

In the art of Daniel and Cavalcanti, I have seen that precision which I miss in the Victorians—that explicit rendering, be it of external nature, or of emotion. Their testimony is of the eyewitness, their symptoms are first hand.

As for the nineteenth century, with all respect to its achievements, I think we shall look back upon it as a rather blurry, messy sort of a period, a rather sentimentalistic, mannerish sort of a period. I say this without any self-righteousness, with no self-satisfaction.

As for there being a "movement" or my being of it,

the conception of poetry as a "pure art" in the sense in which I use the term, revived with Swinburne. From the puritanical revolt to Swinburne, poetry had been merely the vehicle—yes, definitely, Arthur Symons' scruples and feelings about the word not withholding—the ox-cart and post-chaise for transmitting thoughts poetic or otherwise. And perhaps the "great Victorians," though it is doubtful, and assuredly the "nineties" continued the development of the art, confining their improvements, however, chiefly to sound and to refinements of manner.

Mr. Yeats has once and for all stripped English poetry of its perdamnable rhetoric. He has boiled away all that is not poetic—and a good deal that is. He has become a classic in his own lifetime and *nel mezzo del cammin.* He has made our poetic idiom a thing pliable, a speech without inversions.

Robert Bridges, Maurice Hewlett and Frederic Manning are[1] in their different ways seriously concerned with overhauling the metric, in testing the language and its adaptability to certain modes. Ford Hueffer is making some sort of experiments in modernity. The Provost of Oriel continues his translation of the *Divina Commedia.*

As to Twentieth century poetry, and the poetry which I expect to see written during the next decade or so, it will, I think, move against poppy-cock, it will be harder and saner, it will be what Mr. Hewlett calls "nearer the bone." It will be as much like granite as it can be, its force will lie in its truth, its interpretative power (of course, poetic force does always rest there); I mean it will not try to seem forcible by rhetorical din, and lux-

[1] (Dec., 1911.)

urious riot. We will have fewer painted adjectives impeding the shock and stroke of it. At least for myself, I want it so, austere, direct, free from emotional slither.

. . .

What is there now, in 1917, to be added?

RE VERS LIBRE

I think the desire for vers libre is due to the sense of quantity reasserting itself after years of starvation. But I doubt if we can take over, for English, the rules of quantity laid down for greek and latin, mostly by latin grammarians.

I think one should write vers libre only when one "must," that is to say, only when the "thing" builds up a rhythm more beautiful than that of set metres, or more real, more a part of the emotion of the "thing," more germane, intimate, interpretative than the measure of regular accentual verse; a rhythm which discontents one with set iambic or set anapaestic.

Eliot has said the thing very well when he said, "No *vers* is *libre* for the man who wants to do a good job."

As a matter of detail, there is vers libre with accent heavily marked as a drum-beat (as par example my "Dance Figure"), and on the other hand I think I have gone as far as can profitably be gone in the other direction (and perhaps too far). I mean I do not think one can use to any advantage rhythms much more tenuous and imperceptible than some I have used. I think progress lies rather in an attempt to approximate classical quantitative metres (NOT to copy them) than in a carelessness regarding such things.[1]

. . .

[1] Let me date this statement 20. Aug., 1917.

I agree with John Yeats on the relation of beauty to certitude. I prefer satire, which is due to emotion, to any sham of emotion.

I have had to write, or at least I have written a good deal about art, sculpture, painting and poetry. I have seen what seemed to me the best of contemporary work reviled and obstructed. Can any one write prose of permanent or durable interest when he is merely saying for one year what nearly every one will say at the end of three or four years? I have been battistrada for a sculptor, a painter, a novelist, several poets. I wrote also of certain French writers in *The New Age* in nineteen twelve or eleven.

I would much rather that people would look at Brzeska's sculpture and Lewis' drawings, and that they would read Joyce, Jules Romains, Eliot, than that they should read what I have said of these men, or that I should be asked to republish argumentative essays and reviews.

All that the critic can do for the reader or audience or spectator is to focus his gaze or audition. Rightly or wrongly I think my blasts and essays have done their work, and that more people are now likely to go to the sources than are likely to read this book.

Jammes' "Existences" in "La Triomphe de la Vie" is available. So are his early poems. I think we need a convenient anthology rather than descriptive criticism. Carl Sandburg wrote me from Chicago, "It's hell when poets can't afford to buy each other's books." Half the people who care, only borrow. In America so few people know each other that the difficulty lies more than half in distribution. Perhaps one should make an anthology: Romains' "Un Être en Marche" and "Prières," Vildrac's "Visite." Retrospectively the fine wrought work of La Forgue, the flashes of Rimbaud,

the hard-bit lines of Tristan Corbière, Tailhade's sketches in "Poèmes Aristophanesques," the "Litanies" of DeGourmont.

. . .

It is difficult at all times to write of the fine arts, it is almost impossible unless one can accompany one's prose with many reproductions. Still I would seize this chance or any chance to reaffirm my belief in Wyndham Lewis' genius, both in his drawings and his writings. And I would name an out of the way prose book, the "Scenes and Portraits" of Frederic Manning, as well as James Joyce's short stories and novel, "Dubliners" and the now well known "Portrait of the Artist," as well as Lewis' "Tarr," if, that is, I may treat my strange reader as if he were a new friend come into the room, intent on ransacking my bookshelf.

ONLY EMOTION ENDURES

"Only emotion endures." Surely it is better for me to name over the few beautiful poems that still ring in my head than for me to search my flat for back numbers of periodicals and rearrange all that I have said about friendly and hostile writers.

The first twelve lines of Padraic Colum's "Drover"; his "O Woman shapely as a swan, on your account I shall not die"; Joyce's "I hear an army"; the lines of Yeats that ring in my head and in the heads of all young men of my time who care for poetry: Braseal and the Fisherman, "The fire that stirs about her when she stirs"; the later lines of "The Scholars" the faces of the Magi; William Carlos Williams' "Postlude," Aldington's version of "Atthis," and "H. D.'s" waves like pine tops, and her verse in "Des Imagistes" the first

anthology; Hueffer's "How red your lips are" in his translation from Von der Vogelweide, his "Three Ten," the general effect of his "On Heaven"; his sense of the prose values or prose qualities in poetry; his ability to write poems that will sing to music, as distinct from poems that half-chant and are spoiled by a musician's additions; beyond these a poem by Alice Corbin, "One City Only," and another ending "But sliding water over a stone." These things have worn smooth in my head and I am not through with them, nor with Aldington's "In Via Sestina" nor his other poems in "Des Imagistes" though people have told me their flaws. It may be that their content is too much embedded in me for me to look back at the words.

I am almost a different person when I come to take up the argument for Eliot's poems.

. . .

REMY DE GOURMONT[1]

I

It is foolish, perhaps, to say that a man "stands for all that is best in such and such a country." It is a vague phrase, and the use of vague phrases is foolish, and yet Remy de Gourmont had in some way made himself into a symbol of so much that is finest in France that one is tempted to apply some such phrase to him.

I think no man in France could have died leaving so personal a sense of loss among scattered groups of intelligent young men who had never laid eyes on him. I do not mean to say that he was the "greatest writer in France." That method of assessing authors by size is unfortunate and Victorian. There were in France a few pre-eminently good writers: Anatole France, Remy de Gourmont, Henri de Regnier, Francis Jammes, Laurent Tailhade. There are popular figures and crazes like Maeterlinck, Claudel, and Paul Fort. I am not an examining board trying to determine which of these gentlemen is to receive the highest award. I am not determining a percentage of bay leaves. The writings of the five first-mentioned men are all of them indispensable to one's comfort.

Yet before the war Anatole France was so old that communication between him and the active part of our world had almost ceased. And Henri de Regnier was set apart, as it were, amid "The Spoils of Poynton,"

[1] The *Fortnightly Review*, 1915.

or behind some such metaphorical barrier. And Jammes, after four beautiful books to his credit, had gone *gaga* over catholicism, and from Remy de Gourmont alone there proceeded a personal, living force. "Force" is almost a misnomer; let us call it a personal light.

The man was infused through his work. If you "hold a pistol to my head" and say: "Produce the masterpiece on which you base these preposterous claims for De Gourmont!" I might not be able to lay out an array of books to equal those of his elder friend, Anatole France, or of De Regnier, or to find three volumes of poems to compare with the first books by Francis Jammes, or, indeed, to uphold that test against various men whose names I have not mentioned. You, on the other hand, would be in very much the same fix if you were commanded suddenly to produce the basis of your respect for De Quincey or Coleridge.

It is, I think, Coleridge who says that the test of a great poet is not to be found in individual passages, but in a mysterious pervasive essence, "everywhere present and nowhere a distinct excitement."

As you read De Gourmont's work it is not any particular phrase, poem, or essay that holds you, so much as a continuing sense of intelligence, of a limpid, active intelligence in the mind of the writer.

I express, perhaps, a personal and an unpopular emotion when I say that this constant sense of the intelligence of the man behind the writing is a great comfort. I even hope that intelligence, in writers, is coming back, if not into fashion, at least into favour with a public large enough to make certain kinds of books once more printable. We have suffered a period in which the glorification of stupidity and the worship of unintelligent,

"messy" energy have been too much encouraged. (With the appearance of James Joyce and T. S. Eliot, and the more "normal" part of Mr. Wyndham Lewis's narrative writings, one may even hope that intelligence shall once more have its innings, even in our own stalwart tongue.)

The qualities of Remy de Gourmont's intelligence? Limpidity and fairness and graciousness, and irony, and a sensuous charm in his decoration when he chose to make his keen thought flash out against a richly-coloured background; these things were all in his writing. The peculiarity of his narrative work may have been just this method of resting the mind as it were by an "aroma." What shall I call it?

He stirs the "senses of the imagination," the reader is pervaded by luxurious rest, and then when the mind is most open, De Gourmont darts in with his acumen, a thrust, an incisive or revolutionary idea, spoken so softly.

His "Diomèdes" searches for truth in the Rue Bonaparte and environs. As Turgenev builds up a whole novel to enforce two or three Russian proverbs; to make you know that he, the author, has understood some very simple phrase in all its profundity; as in the "Nichée de Gentilshommes" he has put first, "The heart of another is a dark forest," and then in the middle of the book, man, his hero, opposed to the old trees of his dismantled garden, and then finally old Maria Timofevna's "Nothing but death is irrevocable," so, in a very different manner Remy de Gourmont has embedded his philosophy in a luxurious mist of the senses. But this particularity of method would in itself amount to very little.

De Gourmont wrote twice a month, a little "Epilogue" in the *Mercure de France*. Early in his career he had

written a large and beautiful book "Le Latin Mystique du Moyen Age," and in this book he laid before his few readers a great amount of forgotten beauty, the beauty of a period slighted by philological scholars. These were causes contributory to his position, but no one of them would have accounted for it.

His work had what very little work ever has, despite continuous advertisements to the contrary. It had a personal charm, and this charm was that of intelligence.

Ideas came to him as a series of fine wines to a delicate palate, and he was never inebriated. He never ran *amok*. And this is the whole difference between the French and Tedescan systems: a German never knows when a thought is "only to be thought"—to be thought out in all its complexity and its beauty—and when it is to be made a basis of action.

I believe England guards against such mistakes by mistrusting thought altogether. At least I once saw a very amusing encounter, as follows: A Russian, who had taken degrees at Leipzig on prehistoric Greek philosophers, came to England. He believed that "The Germans are the only Greeks of to-day." He was going, at least he said he was going, "to convert England to philosophy." It was a noble adventure.

He propounded his crusade in a company consisting of two foreigners, myself, and one Englishman. All the Englishman said was, "I don't believe in ideas."

It was a very sincere personal statement. The Russian shortly afterwards retired to Paris, to start a peripatetic school in the "Jardins du Luxembourg," but he finally went to America, and was at once made a professor.[1]

England has been very safe with her "Don't believe

[1] This tale is not a figment of my imagination; it is not allegory, but fact.

in ideas." Germany has got decidedly and disgustingly drunk. But Paris is the laboratory of ideas; it is there that poisons can be tested, and new modes of sanity be discovered. It is there that the antiseptic conditions of the laboratory exist. That is the function of Paris.

It was peculiarly the function of De Gourmont.

For years he has written "controversially," if I may use a word with such strong connotations. I believe he has never once made an over-statement, or, for that matter, an under-statement of his thought. I don't say that he has always been right. But he had this absolute fairness, the fairness of a man watching his own experiment in laboratory. And this absolute fairness, this absolute openness to all thought, is precisely the most difficult thing to attain.

We are all touched with the blight of Tertullian. Whatever our aims and ambitions and our firm conviction to the contrary, we have our moments off guard when we become unfair, and partisan, and personal in our spite, and intolerant.

De Gourmont carried his lucidity to the point of genius. All ideas, all works of art, all writing came to him, and he received them all graciously, and he praised graciously, or ignored graciously. And he wrote beautifully and graciously from himself. He was the friend of intelligence. He had not lost touch with "*les jeunes.*"

And that last is more important and more difficult than one might think. If a man has "come in" with one generation and taken part in the development of and triumph of one "new" set of ideas, it is especially and peculiarly difficult for him to adapt himself to the next set, which comes in some twenty years later. No man can lead two movements, and it is very hard for him to understand two movements. A movement degenerates

into over-emphasis. It begins with the recognition of a neglect. When youth is divided into acrimonious parties it is perhaps difficult for age to tell which side has the intelligence, but you could trust Remy de Gourmont to discover intelligence in whatever form it might appear.

It is a slight thing that I am going to tell now, but it is not without its minute significance. When I was in Paris some years ago I happened, by merest accident, to be plunged into a meeting, a vortex of twenty men, and among them five or six of the most intelligent young men in Paris. I should say that Paris is a place like another; in "literature" the French are cursed with amorphous thought, rhetoric, bombast, Claudel, &c., stale Hugo, stale Corneille, &c., just as we are cursed here with stale Victoriana, stale Miltoniana, &c. The young party of intelligence in Paris, a party now just verging on the threshold of middle-age, is the group that centred about "L'Effort Libre." It contains Jules Romains, Vildrac, Duhamel, Chennevière, Jouve, and their friends. These men were plotting a gigantic blague. A "blague" when it is a fine blague is a satire upon stupidity, an attack. It is the weapon of intelligence at bay; of intelligence fighting against an alignment of odds. These men were thorough. They had exposed a deal of ignorance and stupidity in places where there should have been the reverse. They were serious, and they were "keeping it up." And the one man they mentioned with sympathy, the one older man to whom they could look for comprehension, and even for discreet assistance, was Remy de Gourmont. Remy would send them a brief telegram to be read at their public meeting.

That is, at first sight, a very trifling matter, but, if examined closely, it shows a number of things: first, that de Gourmont was absolutely independent, that he

was not tied to any institution, that his position was based on his intelligence alone and not on his "connections" (as I believe they are called in our "literary world").

"Franchement d'écrire ce qu'on pense, seul plaisir d'un écrivain." "To put down one's thought frankly, a writer's one pleasure." That phrase was the centre of Gourmont's position. It was not a phrase understood superficially. It is as much the basis of a clean literature, of all literature worth the name, as is an antiseptic method, the basis of sound surgical treatment.

"Franchement," "Frankly," is "Frenchly," if one may drag in philology. If, in ten lines or in a hundred pages, I can get the reader to comprehend what that one adjective *means* in literature, what it means to all civilisation, I shall have led him part of the way toward an understanding of de Gourmont's importance.

"Frankly" does not mean "grossly." It does not mean the over-emphasis of neo-realism, of red-bloodism, of slums dragged into light, of men writing while drugged with two or three notions, or with the lust for an epigram. It means simply that a man writes his thought, that is to say, his doubts, his inconclusions as well as his "convictions," which last are so often borrowed affairs.

There is no lasting shelter between an intelligent man and his own perception of truth, but nine-tenths of all writing displays an author trying, by force of will, to erect such shelter for others. De Gourmont was one of the rare authors who did not make this stupid endeavour; who wholly eschewed malingering.

It was not a puritanical privation for him, it was his nature to move in this way. The mind, the imagination is the proper domain of freedom. The body, the outer world, is the proper domain of fraternal deference.

The tedium and the habit of the great ruck of writers is that they are either incoherent and amorphous, or else they write in conformity to, or in defence of, a set of fixed, rigid notions, instead of disclosing their thought . . . which might, in rare cases, be interesting. It is to be noted that de Gourmont is never tedious. That is the magic of clarity.

"A very few only, and without gain or joy to themselves, can transform directly the acts of others into their own personal thoughts, the multitude of men thinks only thoughts already emitted, feels but feelings used up, and has but sensations as faded as old gloves. When a new word arrives at its destination, it arrives like a post-card that has gone round the world and on which the handwriting is blurred and obliterated with blots and stains." I open the "Chevaux de Diomèdes" at random and come upon that passage of Gourmont's thought.

> "Non è mai tarde per tentar l'ignoto,
> Non è mai tarde per andar più oltre,"

but it was never with the over-orchestration of the romantic period, nor with the acrid and stupid crudity of societies for the propagation of this, that, and the other, that de Gourmont's mind went placidly out into new fields.

He never abandoned beauty. The mountain stream may be as antiseptic as the sterilised dressing. There was the quality and the completeness of life in de Gourmont's mode of procedure. Just as there is more wisdom, perhaps more "revolution," in Whistler's portrait of young Miss Alexander than in all the Judaic drawings of the "prophetic" Blake, so there is more life in Remy than in all the reformers.

Voltaire called in a certain glitter to assist him. De Gourmont's ultimate significance may not be less than Voltaire's. He walked gently through the field of his mind. His reach, his ultimate efficiency are just this; he thought things which other men cannot, for an indefinitely prolonged period of time, be prevented from thinking. His thoughts were not merely the fixed mental habits of the animal *homo*.

And I call the reader to witness that he, de Gourmont, differed from Fabians, Webbists, Shavians (all of whom, along with all dealers in abstractions, are ultimately futile). He differed from them in that his thoughts had the property of life. They, the thoughts, were all related to life, they were immersed in the manifest universe while he thought them, they were not cut out, put on shelves and in bottles.

Anyone who has read him will know what I mean. Perhaps it is quite impossible to explain it to one who has not.

. . . . . .

In poetry as in prose de Gourmont has built up his own particular form. I am not sure that he was successful, in fact I am rather convinced that he was not successful in the "Simone," where he stays nearer the poetic forms invented by others. His *own* mode began, I think, with the translation of the very beautiful "sequaire" of Goddeschalk in "Le Latin Mystique." This he made, very possibly, the basis of his "Livre de Litanies," at least this curious evocational form, the curious repetitions, the personal sweeping rhythm, are made wholly his own, and he used them later in "Les Saints de Paradis," and last of all in the prose sonnets.

These "sonnets" are among the few successful endeavours to write poetry *of our own time.* I know there is much superficial modernity, but in these prose sonnets Remy de Gourmont has solved the two thorniest questions. The first difficulty in a modern poem is to give a feeling of the reality of the speaker, the second, given the reality of the speaker, to gain any degree of poignancy in one's utterance.

That is to say, you must begin in a normal, natural tone of voice, and you must, somewhere, express or cause a deep feeling. I am, let us say, in an omnibus with Miscio Itow. He has just seen some Japanese armour and says it is like his grandfather's, and then simply running on in his own memory he says: "When I first put on my grandfather's helmet, my grandmother cried . . . because I was so like what my grandfather was at eighteen."

You may say that Itow is himself an exotic, but still, there is material for an hokku, and poetry does touch modern life, or at least pass over it swiftly, though it does not much appear in modern verses.

De Gourmont has not been driven even to an exotic speaker. His sonnets begin in the metropolis. The speaker is past middle age. It is a discussion of what he calls in the course of the sequence of poems "la géométrie subordonnée du corps humain."

I shall give a dozen or more phrases from the sequence (which consists, if I remember rightly, of about two dozen poems). By this means I shall try to give, not a continuous meaning, but simply the tone, the conversational, ironic, natural tone of the writing, the scientific dryness, even, as follows:—

"Mes déductions sont certains. . . .

"Mais le blanc est fondamental. . . .

"J'ai plus aimé les yeux que toutes les autres manifestations corporelles de la beauté. . . .

"Les yeux sont le manomètre de la machine animale. . . .

"Et leurs paroles signifient le désir de l'être, ou la placidité de sa volonté. . . .

"Mais on pense aussi avec les mains, avec les genoux, avec les yeux, avec la bouche et avec le cœur. On pense avec tous les organes, . . .

"Et à vrai dire, nous ne sommes peut-être que pensée. . . .

"Je parlerais des yeux, je chanterais les yeux toute ma vie. Je sais toutes leurs couleurs et toutes leurs volontés, leur destinée. . . .

"Dont je n'ignore pas les correspondances. . . .

"C'est une belle chose qu'une tête de femme, librement inscrite dans le cercle esthétique. . . ."

Or even more solidly:—

"Je sculpte une hypothèse dans le marbre de la logique éternelle. . . .

"Les épaules sont des sources d'où descend la fluidité des bras. . . ."

And then, when one is intent and wholly off guard, comes, out of this "unpoetic," unemotional *constatation,* the passage:—

"Les yeux se font des discours entre eux.
Près de se ternir . . . les miens te parleront encore, mais ils n'emporteront pas bien loin ta réponse,
Car on n'emporte rien, on meurt. Laisse-moi donc regarder les yeux que j'ai decouverts,
Les yeux qui me survivront."

He has worn off the trivialities of the day, he has conquered the fret of contemporaneousness by exhausting it in his pages of dry discussion, and we come on the

feeling, the poignancy, as directly as we do in the old poet's—

Λέγοισιν αἱ γυναῖκες
Ανακρέων γέρων εἶ.

"Dicunt mihi puellae
Anacreon senex es."

It is the triumph of skill and reality, though it is barbarous of me to try to represent the force of the original poems by such a handful of phrases taken at random, and I am not trying to convince anyone who will not read the "Sonnets in Prose" for himself.

II [1]

Remy de Gourmont is dead and the world's light is darkened. This is another of the crimes of the war, for de Gourmont was only fifty-seven, and if he had not been worried to death, if he had not been grieved to death by the cessation of all that has been "life" as he understood it, there was no reason why we should not have had more of his work and his company.

He is as much "dead of the war" as if he had died in the trenches, and he left with almost the same words on his lips. "Nothing is being done in Paris, nothing can be done, *faute de combattants.*" There was an elegy on current writing by him in the *Mercure.* It was almost the same tone in which Gaudier-Brzeska wrote to me a few days before he was shot at Neuville St. Vaast: "Is anything of importance or even of interest going on in the world—I mean the 'artistic London'?"

Remy de Gourmont is irreplaceable. I think I do not write for myself alone when I say no other Frenchman could have died leaving so personal a sense of loss in

[1] *Poetry,* Jan., 1916.

the minds of many young men who had never laid eyes on him. Some fames and reputations are like that; Mallarmé is almost a mantram, a word for conjuring. A critique of de Gourmont's poetry would be by no means a critique of his influence. For, again, I think that every young man in London whose work is worth considering at all, has felt that in Paris existed this gracious presence, this final and kindly tribunal where all work would stand on its merits. One had this sense of absolute fairness—no prestige, no over-emphasis, could work upon it.

"Permettre à ceux qui en valent la peine d'écrire franchement ce qu'il pense—seul plaisir d'un écrivain": these were almost the last words he wrote to me, save a postscript on the outside of the envelope; and they are almost his "whole law and gospel." And indeed a right understanding of them means the whole civilization of letters.

Outside a small circle in Paris and a few scattered groups elsewhere, this civilization does not exist. Yet the phrase is so plain and simple: "to permit those who are worth it to write frankly what they think."

That is the destruction of all rhetoric and all journalism. I mean that when a nation, or a group of men, or an editor, arrives at the state of mind where he really understands that phrase, rhetoric and journalism are done with. The true aristocracy is founded, permanent and indestructible. It is also the end of log-rolling, the end of the British school of criticism for the preservation of orderly and innocuous persons. It is the end of that "gravity" to which Sterne alludes as "a mysterious carriage of the body to cover the defects of the mind."

De Gourmont did not make over-statements. His

Diomedes is a hero because he is facing life, he is facing it quite sincerely, with no protection whatever. Ibsen with his smoky lightning had rumbled out, "There is no intermediator between God and man." De Gourmont, with his perfect and gracious placidity, had implied—yes, implied, made apparent rather than stated—that no formula can stand between man and life; or rather that no creed, no dogma, can protect the thinking man from looking at life directly, forming his own thought from his own sensuous contact and from his contact with thoughts.

Nietzsche has done no harm in France because France has understood that thought can exist apart from action; that it is perfectly fitting and expedient clearly to think certain things which it is neither fitting nor expedient to "spoil by action."

"Spoil by action" is perhaps a bad memory of the phrase; but just as Dante was able to consider two thoughts as blending and giving off music, so Diomedes in De Gourmont's story is able to think things which translation into action would spoil. As for Diomedes' career, I am perfectly willing to accept Robert Frost's statement that "there is nothing like it in New England." What there is in all provincial places is an attempt to suppress part of the evidence, to present life out of proportion with itself, squared to fit some local formula of respectability.

Remy de Gourmont had written throughout his life in absolute single-blessedness; it was to express his thought, his delicate, subtle, quiet and absolutely untrammeled revery, with no regard whatsoever for existing belief, with no after-thought or beside-thought either to conform or to avoid conforming. That is the sainthood of literature.

I think I can show what I mean almost by a single sentence. In the midst of the present whirlwind of abuse he said quietly: "By Kultur, the Germans mean what we mean by 'state education.' "

It had been so all his life; on whatever matter, however slight the matter or however strong his own passion, there had been that same quiet precision, that same ultimate justness.

The rest of us are caught in the flurry of controversy. Remy de Gourmont had found—it might not be incorrect to say that Paris had given him—a place where all things could be said quietly and openly, where one would not think of circumlocution and prejudice, where circumlocution and prejudice would have seemed unnatural.

En tous les pays il y a un noyau de bons esprits, d'esprits libres. Il faut leur donner quelque chose qui les change de la fadeur des magazines, quelque chose qui leur donne confiance en eux-mêmes, et leur soit un point d'appui.

That is good news, but for years M. de Gourmont had believed it and written accordingly. He had written selflessly, and was glad when other men could write well. He dared to write for the few, for the few who are not a clique or a faction, but who are united by the ability to think clearly, and who do not attempt to warp or to smother this faculty; who do not suppress part of the evidence.

The significance of Remy de Gourmont and the significance of his poetry are two things apart. He has written for the most part beautiful prose, much controversy, a book on "Le Latin Mystique du Moyen Age," etc. He has written a *poème champêtre* and some *Litanies.*

I have praised these litanies elsewhere, and a man's obituary notice is not, perhaps, the best place for analyzing his metric. Suffice it to say that the litanies are a marvel of rhythm, that they have not been followed or repeated, that de Gourmont was not of "the young French school." If he is "grouped" anywhere he must be grouped, as poet, among *les symbolistes.* The litanies are evocation, not statement.

De Gourmont was indubitably "of the young" in the sense that his mind had not lost its vigor, that he was alive to contemporary impressions, that he had not gone gaga over catholicism like poor Francis Jammes, nor wallowed in metrical journalism like the ill-starred Paul Fort. He had never lost touch with the men born ten or twenty years after he was; for a man of fifty-seven that is a very considerable achievement. Or rather it is not an achievement, for it can not be done by effort; it can only come from a natural freshness and aliveness of the mind, and is a matter of temperament.

I had forgotten the French Academy until an article in *L'Humanité* reminded me that de Gourmont was not a member thereof; that the ancient association which contains Auguste Swallou, Thibaudet de Mimmil, and so many other "immortals" had not seen fit to elect him.

It is evident that the "Académie Françoise" has outlived its usefulness, and if France does not set an example what *can* be expected of other academies? In de Gourmont's case the academy had no excuse. He had not only written supremely, but he had given back to the world a lost beauty—in *Le Latin Mystique,* in the *Sequaire* of Goddeschalk with its *Amas ut facias pulchram.*

But perhaps, as a friend of mine wrote when Swinburne was refused sepulture in Westminster Abbey

(they said there was no room and buried the canon's wife the week after), perhaps, as my friend wrote at the time, "perhaps it is just as well—he suffered fools badly."

I have known also that the really distinguished member, at a meeting of another "great body," encouraged one of his more serious colleagues, who was showing signs of tedium, with "Come, come, we are not here to enjoy ourselves."

De Gourmont has gone—

Blandula, tenulla, vagula—

almost with a jest on his lips, for his satire on *M. Croquant et la Guerre* continues in the current *Mercure.*

MR. HUEFFER AND THE PROSE TRADITION IN VERSE [1]

In a country in love with amateurs, in a country where the incompetent have such beautiful manners and personalities so fragile and charming, that one can not bear to injure their feelings by the introduction of competent criticism, it is well that one man should have a vision of perfection and that he should be sick to the death and disconsolate because he can not attain it.

Mr. Yeats wrote years ago that the highest poetry is so precious that one should be willing to search many a dull tome to find and gather the fragments. As touching poetry this was, perhaps, no new feeling. Yet where nearly everyone else is still dominated by an eighteenth-century verbalism, Mr. Hueffer has had this instinct for prose. It is he who has insisted, in the face of a still-Victorian press, upon the importance of good writing as opposed to the opalescent word, the rhetorical tradition. Stendhal had said, and Flaubert, De Maupassant and Turgenev had proved, that "prose was the higher art"—at least their prose.

It is impossible to talk about perfection without getting yourself very much disliked. It is even more difficult in a capital where everybody's Aunt Lucy or Uncle George has written something or other, and where the victory of any standard save that of mediocrity would at once banish so many nice people from the temple of

[1] *Poetry*, June, 1914.

immortality. So it comes about that Mr. Hueffer is the best critic in England, one might say the only critic of any importance. What he says today the press, the reviewers, who hate him and who disparage his books, will say in about nine years' time, or possibly sooner. Shelley, Yeats, Swinburne, with, respectively, their "unacknowledged legislators," with "Nothing affects these people except our conversation," with "The rest live under us"; Remy de Gourmont, when he says that most men think only husks and shells of the thoughts that have been already lived over by others, have shown their very just appreciation of the system of echoes, of the general vacuity of public opinion. America is like England, America is very much what England would be with the two hundred most interesting people removed. One's life is the score of this two hundred with whom one happens to have made friends. I do not see that we need to say the rest live under them, but it is certain that what these people say comes to pass. They live in their mutual credence, and thus they live things over and fashion them before the rest of the world is aware. I dare say it is a Cassandra-like and useless faculty, at least from the world's point of view. Mr. Hueffer has possessed the peculiar faculty of "foresight," or of constructive criticism, in a pre-eminent degree.

And if you think things ten or fifteen or twenty years before anyone else thinks them you will be considered absurd and ridiculous. Some professor feels that if certain ideas gain ground he will have to rewrite his lectures, some parson feels that if certain other ideas are accepted he will have to throw up his position. They search for the forecaster's weak points.

Mr. Hueffer is still underestimated for another reason: namely, that we have not yet learned that prose is,

perhaps, as precious and as much to be sought after as verse, even its shreds and patches. So that, if one of the finest chapters in English is hidden in a claptrap novel, we cannot weigh the vision which made it against the weariness or the confusion which dragged down the rest of the work. Yet we would do this readily with a poem. If a novel have a form as distinct as that of a sonnet, and if its workmanship be as fine as that of some Pleiade rondel, we complain of the slightness of the motive. Yet we would not deny praise to the rondel. So it remains for a prose craftsman like Mr. Arnold Bennett to speak well of Mr. Hueffer's prose, and for a verse-craftsman like myself to speak well of his verses. And the general public will have little or none of him because he does not put on pontifical robes, because he does not take up the megaphone of some known and accepted pose, and because he makes enemies among the stupid by his rather engaging frankness.

We may as well begin with the knowledge that Mr. Hueffer is a keen critic and a skilled writer of prose, and we may add that he is not wholly unsuccessful as a composer, and that he has given us, in *On Heaven,* the best longish poem yet written in the "twentieth-century fashion."

Coleridge has spoken of "the miracle that might be wrought simply by one man's feeling a thing more clearly or more poignantly than anyone had felt it before." The last century showed us a fair example when Swinburne awoke to the fact that poetry was an art, not merely a vehicle for the propagation of doctrine. England and Germany are still showing the effects of his perception. I can not belittle my belief that Mr. Hueffer's realization that poetry should be written at least as well as prose will have as wide a result. He

himself will tell you that it is "all Christina Rossetti," and that "it was not Wordsworth, for Wordsworth was so busied about the ordinary word that he never found time to think about *le mot juste.*"

As for Christina, Mr. Hueffer is a better critic than I am, and I would be the last to deny that a certain limpidity and precision are the ultimate qualities of style; yet I can not accept his opinion. Christina had these qualities, it is true—in places, but they are to be found also in Browning and even in Swinburne at rare moments. Christina very often sets my teeth on edge,—and so for that matter does Mr. Hueffer. But it is the function of criticism to find what a given work is, not what it is not. It is also the faculty of a capital or of high civilization to value a man for some rare ability, to make use of him and not hinder him or itself by asking of him faculties which he does not possess.

Mr. Hueffer may have found certain properties of style, first for himself, in Christina, but others have found them elsewhere, notably in Arnaut Daniel and in Guido and in Dante, where Christina herself would have found them. Still there is no denying that there is less of the *ore rotundo* in Christina's work than in that of her contemporaries, and that there is also in Hueffer's writing a clear descent from such passages as:

I listened to their honest chat:
  Said one: "Tomorrow we shall be
Plod plod along the featureless sands
  And coasting miles and miles of sea."
Said one: "Before the turn of tide
  We will achieve the eyrie-seat."
Said one: "To-morrow shall be like
  To-day, but much more sweet."

We find the qualities of what some people are calling "the modern cadence" in this strophe, also in *A Dirge,* in *Up Hill,* in—

> Somewhere or other there must surely be
> The face not seen, the voice not heard,

and in—

> Sometimes I said: "It is an empty name
> I long for; to a name why should I give
> The peace of all the days I have to live?"—
> Yet gave it all the same.

Mr. Hueffer brings to his work a prose training such as Christina never had, and it is absolutely the devil to try to quote snippets from a man whose poems are gracious impressions, leisurely, low-toned. One would quote *The Starling,* but one would have to give the whole three pages of it. And one would like to quote patches out of the curious medley, *To All the Dead,*—save that the picturesque patches aren't the whole or the feel of it; or Süssmund's capricious *Address,* a sort of *Inferno* to the *Heaven.* But that also is too long, so I content myself with the opening of an earlier poem, *Finchley Road.*

> As we come up at Baker Street
> Where tubes and trains and 'buses meet
> There's a touch of fog and a touch of sleet;
> And we go on up Hampstead way
> Toward the closing in of day. . . .
>
> You should be a queen or a duchess rather,
> Reigning, instead of a warlike father,

In peaceful times o'er a tiny town,
Where all the roads wind up and down
From your little palace—a small, old place
Where every soul should know your face
And bless your coming.

I quote again, from a still earlier poem where the quiet of his manner is less marked:

Being in Rome I wonder will you go
Up to the Hill. But I forget the name . . .
Aventine? Pincio? No: I do not know.
I was there yesterday and watched. You came.

(*I give the opening only to "place" the second portion of the poem.*)

Though you're in Rome you will not go, my You,
Up to that Hill . . . but I forget the name.
Aventine? Pincio? No, I never knew . . .
I was there yesterday. You never came.

I have that Rome; and you, you have a Me,
You have a Rome, and I, I have my You;
My Rome is not your Rome: my You, not you.
. . . . . For, if man knew woman
I should have plumbed your heart; if woman, man,
Your Me should be true I . . . If in your day—
You who have mingled with my soul in dreams,
You who have given my life an aim and purpose,
A heart, an imaged form—if in your dreams
You have imagined unfamiliar cities
And me among them, I shall never stand
Beneath your pillars or your poplar groves, . . .

Images, simulacra, towns of dreams
That never march upon each other's borders,
And bring no comfort to each other's hearts!

I present this passage, not because it is an example of Mr. Hueffer's present and no longer reminiscent style, but because, like much that appeared four years ago in *Songs from London,* or earlier still in *From Inland,* it hangs in my memory. And so little modern work does hang in one's memory, and these books created so little excitement when they appeared. One took them as a matter of course, and they are not a matter of course, and still less is the later work a matter of course. Oh well, you all remember the preface to the collected poems with its passage about the Shepherd's Bush exhibition, for it appeared first as a pair of essays in *Poetry,* so there is no need for me to speak further of Mr. Hueffer's aims or of his prose, or of his power to render an impression.

There is in his work another phase that depends somewhat upon his knowledge of instrumental music. Dante has defined a poem as a composition of words set to music, and the intelligent critic will demand that either the composition of words or the music shall possess a certain interest, or that there be some aptitude in their jointure together. It is true that since Dante's day—and indeed his day and Cassella's saw a re-beginning of it—"music" and "poetry" have drifted apart, and we have had a third thing which is called "word music." I mean we have poems which are read or even, in a fashion, intoned, and are "musical" in some sort of complete or inclusive sense that makes it impossible or inadvisable to "set them to music." I mean obviously such poems as the First Chorus of *Atalanta* or many of

Mr. Yeats' lyrics. The words have a music of their own, and a second "musician's" music is an impertinence or an intrusion.

There still remains the song to sing: to be "set to music," and of this sort of poem Mr. Hueffer has given us notable examples in his rendering of Von der Vogelweide's *Tandaradei* and, in lighter measure, in his own *The Three-Ten:*

When in the prime and May-day time dead lovers went a-walking,
How bright the grass in lads' eyes was, how easy poet's talking!
Here were green hills and daffodils, and copses to contain them:
Daisies for floors did front their doors agog for maids to chain them.
So when the ray of rising day did pierce the eastern heaven
Maids did arise to make the skies seem brighter far by seven.
Now here's a street where 'bus routes meet, and 'twixt the wheels and paving
Standeth a lout who doth hold out flowers not worth the having.
But see, but see! The clock strikes three above the Kilburn Station,
Those maids, thank God, are 'neath the sod and all their generation.

What she shall wear who'll soon appear, it is not hood nor wimple,
But by the powers there are no flowers so stately or so simple.

And paper shops and full 'bus tops confront the sun
so brightly,
That, come three-ten, no lovers then had hearts that
beat so lightly
As ours or loved more truly,
Or found green shades or flowered glades to fit their
loves more duly.
*And see, and see! 'Tis ten past three above the Kil-
burn Station,*
*Those maids, thank God! are 'neath the sod and all
their generation.*

Oh well, there are very few song writers in England, and it's a simple old-fashioned song with a note of futurism in its very lyric refrain; and I dare say you will pay as little attention to it as I did five years ago. And if you sing it aloud, once over, to yourself, I dare say you'll be just as incapable of getting it out of your head, which is perhaps one test of a lyric.

It is not, however, for Mr. Hueffer's gift of song-writing that I have considered him at such length; this gift is rare but not novel. I find him significant and revolutionary because of his insistance upon clarity and precision, upon the prose tradition; in brief, upon efficient writing—even in verse.

THE REV. G. CRABBE, LL.B.

"Since the death of Laurence Sterne or thereabouts, there has been neither in England nor America any sufficient sense of the value of realism in literature, of the value of writing words that conform precisely with fact, of free speech without evasions and circumlocutions."

I had forgotten, when I wrote this, the Rev. Crabbe, LL.B.

Think of the slobber that Wordsworth would have made over the illegitimate infant whom Crabbe dismisses with: *"There smiles your Bride, there sprawls your newborn Son."*

Byron liked him, but the British Public did not. The British public liked, has liked, likes and always will like all art, music, poetry, literature, glass engraving, sculpture, etc., in just such measure as it approaches the Tennysonian tone. It likes Shakespear, or at least accepts him in just so far as he is "Tennysonian." It has published the bard of Avon expurgated and even emended. There has never been an edition of "Purified Tennyson."

"It is incredible that his (Tennyson's) whole mind should be made up of fine sentiments," says Bagehot. Of course it wasn't. It was that lady-like attitude toward the printed page that did it—that something, that ineffable "something," which kept Tennyson out of his works. When he began to write for Viccy's ignorant ear, he immediately ceased to be the "Tennyson so muzzy

that he tried to go out through the fireplace,'' the Tennyson with the broad North accent, the old man with the worst manners in England (except Carlyle's), the Tennyson whom ''it kept the whole combined efforts of his family and his publishers to keep respectable.'' He became the Tate Gallery among poets.

The afflatus which has driven great artists to blurt out the facts of life with directness or with cold irony, or with passion, and with always precision; which impels Villon to write—

''Necessity makes men run wry,
And hunger drives the wolf from wood'';

which impels Homer to show Hermes replying to Calypso—

''You, a goddess, ask of me who am a god,
Nevertheless I will tell you the truth'';

which in contact with Turgenev builds a whole novel into the enforcement of some one or two speeches, so that we have, as the gaunt culmination, some phrase about the ''heart of another'' or the wide pardon in Maria Timofevna's ''Nothing but death is irrevocable''; this urge, this impulse (or perhaps it is a different urge and impulse) leads Tennyson into pretty embroideries.

He refined the metric of England, at least he improved on some of Shelley's but did not reach the Elizabethans. Whereas Shakespear has never been refined enough for his compatriots. The eighteenth century set itself to mending his metres, and the nineteenth to mending his morals.

The cult of the innocuous has debouched into the adoration of Wordsworth. He was a silly old sheep with

a genius, an unquestionable genius, for imagisme, for a presentation of natural detail, wild-fowl bathing in a hole in the ice, etc., and this talent, or the fruits of this talent, he buried in a desert of bleatings.

Blake denounced him as an atheist, but for all that he has been deemed so innocuous that he has become, if not the backbone, at least one of the ribs of British kultur. And Crabbe?

The worst that should be said of him is that he still clings to a few of Pope's tricks, and that he is not utterly free from the habit of moralizing. What is, in actuality, usually said of him is that he is "unpoetic," or, patronizingly, "that you can't call this really great poetry."

Pope is sometimes an excellent writer, Crabbe is never absolute slush, nonsense or bombast. That admission should satisfy the multitudinous reader, but it will not.

If the nineteenth century had built itself on Crabbe? Ah, if! But no; they wanted confections.

Crabbe has no variety of metric, but he shows no inconsiderable skill in the use of his one habitual metre, to save the same from monotony.

I admit that he makes vague generalities about "Vice," "Villainy and Crime," etc., but these paragraphs are hardly more than short cuts between one passage of poetry and another.

He does not bore you, he does not disgust you, he does not bring on that feeling of nausea which we have when we realize that we are listening to an idiot who occasionally makes beautiful (or ornamental) verses.

Browning at his best went on with Crabbe's method. He expressed an adoration of Shelley, and he might have learned more from Crabbe, but he was nevertheless the soundest of all the Victorians. Crabbe will perhaps keep better than Browning, he will have a savour of

freshness; of course he is *not* "the greater poet" of the two, but then he gives us such sound satisfaction in his best moments. And those moments are precisely the moments when he draws his "Borough" with greatest exactness, and when he refrains from commenting. They are the moments "when he lets himself go," when he is neither "The Rev." nor the "LL.B." but just good, sensible Crabbe, as at the end of "Inns," or reporting conversations in "Amusements," "Blaney," "Clelia," and the people remembered by "Benbow." If Englishmen had known how to select the best out of Crabbe they would have less need of consulting French stylists. Et pourtant—

"Then liv'd the good Squire Asgill—what a change
Has Death and Fashion shown us at the Grange?
He bravely thought it best became his rank,
That all his Tenants and his Tradesmen drank;
He was delighted from his favorite Room
To see them 'cross the Park go daily home,
Praising aloud the Liquor and the Host,
And striving who should venerate him most.

. . . . . .

Along his valleys in the Evening-Hours
The Borough-Damsels stray'd to gather Flowers,
Or by the Brakes and Brushwood of the Park
To take their pleasant rambles in the dark.

Some Prudes, of rigid kind, forebore to call
On the kind Females—Favorites at the Hall;
But better natures saw, with much delight,
The different orders of mankind unite;
'Twas schooling Pride to see the Footman wait,
Smile on his sister and receive her plate.

Or Sir Denys admitting Clelia to the alms-house—

"With all her faults," he said, "the woman knew
How to distinguish—had a manner too;
And, as they say, she is allied to some
In decent station—let the creature come."

Oh, well! Byron enjoyed him. And the people liked Byron. They liked him for being "romantic." They adored Mrs. Hemans. And some day when Arthur's tomb is no longer an object for metrical research, and when the Albert Memorial is no longer regilded, Crabbe's people will still remain vivid. People will read Miss Austen because of her knowledge of the human heart, and not solely for her refinement.

His, Crabbe's, realism is not the hurried realism of ignorance, he describes an inn called "The Boar"; in his day there was no "Maison Tellier" to serve for a paradigm:

"There dwells a kind old aunt, and there you'll see
Some kind young nieces in her company:
. . . . . .
What though it may some cool observers strike,
That such fair sisters should be so unlike;
And still another and another comes,
And at the Matron's table smiles and blooms;
. . . . . .
A pious friend who with the ancient Dame
At sober cribbage takes an Evening-Game;
His cup beside him, through their play he quaffs
. . . . . .
Or growing serious to the Text resorts,
And from the Sunday-Sermon makes reports, . . ."

ARNOLD DOLMETSCH

I HAVE seen the God Pan and it was in this manner: I heard a bewildering and pervasive music moving from precision to precision within itself. Then I heard a different music, hollow and laughing. Then I looked up and saw two eyes like the eyes of a wood-creature peering at me over a brown tube of wood. Then someone said: Yes, once I was playing a fiddle in the forest and I walked into a wasp's nest.

Comparing these things with what I can read of the earliest and best authenticated appearances of Pan, I can but conclude that they relate to similar occurrences. It is true that I found myself later in a room covered with pictures of what we now call ancient instruments, and that when I picked up the brown tube of wood I found that it had ivory rings upon it. And no proper reed has ivory rings on it, by nature. Also, they told me it was a "recorder," whatever that is.

Our only measure of truth is, however, our own perception of truth. The undeniable tradition of metamorphoses teaches us that things do not remain always the same. They become other things by swift and unanalysable process. It was only when men began to mistrust the myths and to tell nasty lies about the Gods for a moral purpose that these matters became hopelessly confused. Then some unpleasing Semite or Parsee or Syrian began to use myths for social propaganda, when the myth was degraded into an allegory or a fable, and that was the beginning of the end. And the

Gods no longer walked in men's gardens. The first myths arose when a man walked sheer into "nonsense," that is to say, when some very vivid and undeniable adventure befell him, and he told someone else who called him a liar. Thereupon, after bitter experience, perceiving that no one could understand what he meant when he said that he "turned into a tree," he made a myth—a work of art that is—an impersonal or objective story woven out of his own emotion, as the nearest equation that he was capable of putting into words. That story, perhaps, then gave rise to a weaker copy of his emotion in others, until there arose a cult, a company of people who could understand each other's nonsense about the gods.

These things were afterwards incorporated for the condemnable "good of the State," and what was once a species of truth became only lies and propaganda. And they told horrid tales to little boys in order to make them be good; or to the ignorant populace in order to preserve the empire; and religion came to an end and civic science began to be studied. Plato said that artists ought to be kept out of the ideal republic, and the artists swore by their gods that nothing would drag them into it. That is the history of "civilisation," or philology, or Kultur.

When any man is able, by a pattern of notes or by an arrangement of planes or colours, to throw us back into the age of truth, everyone who has been cast back into that age of truth for one instant gives honour to the spell which has worked, to the witch-work or the art-work, or to whatever you like to call it. I say, therefore, that I saw and heard the God Pan; shortly afterwards I saw and heard Mr. Dolmetsch. Mr. Dolmetsch was talking volubly, and he said something very deroga-

tory to music, which needs 240 (or some such number of) players, and can only be performed in one or two capitals. Pepys writes, that in the Fire of London, when the people were escaping by boat on the Thames, there was scarcely a boat in which you would not see them taking a pair of virginals as among their dearest possessions.

Older journalists tell me it is "cold mutton," that Mr. Dolmetsch was heard of fifteen years ago. This shows a tendency that I have before remarked in a civilisation which rests upon journalism, and which has only a sporadic care for the arts. Everyone in London over forty "has heard of" Mr. Dolmetsch, his instruments, etc. The generation under thirty may have heard of him, but you cannot be sure of it. His topical interest is over. I have heard of Mr. Dolmetsch for fifteen years, because I am a crank and am interested in such matters. Mr. Dolmetsch has always been in France or America, or somewhere I wasn't when he was. Also, I have seen broken-down spinets in portentous and pretentious drawing-rooms. I have heard harpsichords played in Parisian concerts, and they sounded like the scratching of multitudinous hens, and I did not wonder that pianos had superseded them. Also, I have known good musicians and have favoured divers sorts of good music. And I have supposed that clavichords were things you might own if you were a millionaire; and that virginals went with citherns and citoles in the poems of the late D. G. Rossetti.

So I had two sets of adventures. First, I perceived a sound which is undoubtedly derived from the Gods, and then I found myself in a reconstructed century—in a century of music, back before Mozart or Purcell, listening to clear music, to tones clear as brown amber. And

this music came indifferently out of the harpsichord or the clavichord or out of virginals or out of odd-shaped viols, or whatever they may be. There were two small girls playing upon them with an exquisite precision; with a precision quite unlike anything I have ever heard from an orchestra. Then someone said in a tone of authority: "It is nonsense to teach people scales. It is rubbish to make them play *this* (tum, tum, tum, tum tum). They must begin to play music. Three years playing scales, that is what they tell you. How can they ever be musicians?"

It reduces itself to about this. Once people played music. It was gracious, exquisite music, and it was played on instruments which gave out the players' exact mood and personality. "It is beautiful even if you play it wrong." The clavichord has the beauty of three or four lutes played together. It has more than that, but no matter. You have your fingers always en rapport with the strings; it is not one dab and then either another dab or else nothing, as with the piano; the music is always lying on your own finger-tips.

This old music was not theatrical. You played it yourself as you read a book of precision. A few people played it together. It was not an interruption but a concentration.

Now, on the other hand, I remember a healthy concert pianist complaining that you couldn't "really give" a big piano concert unless you had the endurance of an ox; and that "women couldn't, of course"; and that gradually the person with long hands was being eliminated from the pianistic world, and that only people with little, short fat fingers could come up to the technical requirements. Whether this is so or not, we have come to the pianola. And one or two people are going

in for sheer pianola. They cut their rolls for the pianola itself, and make it play as if with two dozen fingers when necessary. That is, perhaps, better art than making a pianola imitate the music of two hands of five fingers each. But still something is lacking.

Oriental music is under debate. We say we "can't hear it." Impressionism has reduced us to such a dough-like state of receptivity that we have ceased to like concentration. Or if it has not done this it has at least set a fashion of passivity that has held since the romantic movement. The old music was fit for the old instruments. That was natural. It is proper to play piano music on pianos. But in the end we find that nothing less than a full orchestra will satisfy our modernity.

That is the whole flaw of impressionist or "emotional" music as opposed to pattern music. It is like a drug; you must have more drug, and more noise each time, or this effect, this impression which works from the outside, in from the nerves and sensorium upon the self—is no use, its effect is constantly weaker and weaker. I do not mean that Bach is not emotional, but the early music starts with the mystery of pattern; if you like, with the vortex of pattern; with something which is, first of all, music, and which is capable of being, after that, many things. What I call emotional, or impressionist music, starts with being emotion or impression and then becomes only approximately music. It is, that is to say, something in the terms of something else. If it produces an effect, if, from sounding as music, it moves at all, it can only recede into the original emotion or impression. Programme music is merely a weaker, more flabby and descriptive sort of impressionist music, needing, perhaps, a guide and explanation.

Mr. Dolmetsch was, let us say, enamoured of ancient music. He found it misunderstood. He saw a beauty so great and so various that he stopped composing. He found that the beauty was untranslatable with modern instruments; he has repaired and has entirely remade "ancient instruments." The comfort is that he has done this not for a few rich faddists, as one had been led to suppose. He makes his virginals and clavichords for the price of a bad, of a very bad piano. You can have a virginal for £25 if you order it when he is making a dozen; and you can have a clavichord for a few pounds more, even if he is not making more than one.

My interest in these things is not topical. Mr. Dolmetsch was a topic some years ago, but you are not *au courant,* and you do not much care for music unless you know that a certain sort of very beautiful music is no longer impossible. It is not necessary to wait for a great legacy, or to inhabit a capital city in order to hear magical voices, in order to hear perfect music which does not depend upon your ability to approximate the pianola, or upon great physical strength. Of the clavichord, one can only say, very inexactly, that it is to the piano what the violin is to the bass viol.

As I believe that Lewis and Picasso are capable of revitalising the instinct of design so I believe that a return, an awakening to the possibilities, not necessarily of "Old" music, but of pattern music played upon ancient instruments, is, perhaps, able to make music again a part of life, not merely a part of theatricals. The musician, the performing musician as distinct from the composer, might again be an interesting person, an artist, not merely a sort of manual saltimbanque or a stage hypnotist. It is, perhaps, a question of whether

you want music, or whether you want to see an obsessed personality trying to "dominate" an audience.

I have said little that can be called technical criticism. I have perhaps implied it. There is precision in the making of ancient instruments. Men still make passable violins; I do not see why the art of beautiful-keyed instruments need be regarded as utterly lost. There has been precision in Mr. Dolmetsch's study of ancient texts and notation; he has routed out many errors.[1] He has even, with certain help, unravelled the precision of ancient dancing. He has found a complete notation which might not interest us were it not that this very dancing forces one to a greater precision with the old music. One finds, for instance, that certain tunes called dance tunes must be played double the time at which they are modernly taken.

One art interprets the other. It would almost touch upon theatricals, which I am trying to avoid, if I should say that one steps into a past era when one sees all the other Dolmetsches dancing quaint, ancient steps of Sixteenth Century dancing. One feels that the dance would go on even if there were no audience. That is where real drama begins, and where we leave what I have called, with odium, "theatricals." It is a dance, danced for the dance's sake, not a display. It is music that exists for the sake of being music, not for the sake of, as they say, producing an impression.

Of course there are other musicians working with this same ideal. I take Mr. Dolmetsch as perhaps a unique figure, as perhaps the one man who knows most definitely whither he is going, and why, and who has given most time to old music.

1 Vide his "The Interpretation of the Music of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries."

They tell me "everyone knows Dolmetsch who knows of old music, but not many people know of it." Is that sheer nonsense, or what is the fragment of truth or rumour upon which it is based? Why is it that the fine things always seem to go on in a corner? Is it a judgment on democracy? Is it that what has once been the pleasure of the many, of the pre-Cromwellian many, has been permanently swept out of life? Musical England? A wild man comes into my room and talks of piles of turquoises in a boat, a sort of shop-house-boat east of Cashmere. His talk is full of the colour of the Orient. Then I find he is living over an old-clothes shop in Bow. "And there they seem to play all sorts of instruments."

Is there a popular instinct for anything different from what my ex-landlord calls "the four-hour-touch"? Is it that the aristocracy, which ought to set the fashion, is too weakened and too unreal to perform the due functions of "aristocracy"? Is it that nature can, in fact, only produce a certain number of vortices? That the quattrocento shines out because the vortices of social power coincided with the vortices of creative intelligence? And that when these vortices do not coincide we have an age of "art in strange corners" and of great dullness among the quite rich? Is it that real democracy can only exist under feudal conditions, when no man fears to recognise creative skill in his neighbour?

VERS LIBRE AND ARNOLD DOLMETSCH

Poetry is a composition of words set to music. Most other definitions of it are indefensible, or metaphysical. The proportion or quality of the music may, and does, vary; but poetry withers and "dries out" when it leaves music, or at least an imagined music, too far behind it. The horrors of modern "readings of poetry" are due to oratorical recitation. Poetry must be read as music and not as oratory. I do not mean that the words should be jumbled together and made indistinct and unrecognizable in a sort of onomatopœic paste. I have found few save musicians who pay the least attention to the poet's own music. They are often, I admit, uncritical of his verbal excellence or deficit, ignorant of his "literary" value or bathos. But the literary qualities are not the whole of our art.

Poets who are not interested in music are, or become, bad poets. I would almost say that poets should never be too long out of touch with musicians. Poets who will not study music are defective. I do not mean that they need become virtuosi, or that they need necessarily undergo the musical curriculum of their time. It is perhaps their value that they can be a little refractory and heretical, for all arts tend to decline into the stereotype; and at all times the mediocre tend or try, semiconsciously or unconsciously, to obscure the fact that the day's fashion is not the immutable.

Music and poetry, melody and versification, alike fall under the marasmus.

It is too late to prevent vers libre. But conceivably, one might improve it, and one might stop at least a little of the idiotic and narrow discussion based on an ignorance of music. Bigoted attack, born of this ignorance of the tradition of music, was what we had to live through.

. . .

Arnold Dolmetsch's book, "The Interpretation of the Music of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries,"[1] is full of what we may call either "ripe wisdom" or "common sense," or "those things which all good artists at all times have tried (perhaps vainly) to hammer into insensitive heads." Some of his dicta are, by their nature, applicable only to instrumental music or melody, others are susceptible of a sort of transposition into terms of the sister arts, still others have a direct bearing on poetry, or at least on versification. It is with these last that I shall concern myself. Dolmetsch's style is so clear and his citations of old authors so apt that I had perhaps better quote with small comment.

Mace, "Musick's Monument" (1613):

(1)

. . . you must Know, That, although in our First Undertakings, we ought to *strive,* for the most Exact Habit of *Time-keeping* that possibly we can attain unto, (and for several good Reasons) yet, when we come to be *Masters,* so that we can *command all manner* of Time, at our own Pleasures; we Then *take Liberty,* (and very often, for Humour, and good Adornment-sake, in certain Places) to *Break Time;* sometimes Faster, and sometimes Slower, as we perceive the *Nature of the Thing* Requires, which often adds, much *Grace,* and *Luster,* to the Performance."

[1] (Novello, London, 10s. 6d.; H. W. Gray and Co., New York.)

(2)

. . . the thing to be done, is but only to make a kind of *Cessation,* or *standing still* . . . in due place an excellent grace.

Again, from Mace, p. 130: *"If you find it uniform, and retortive* either in its bars or strains" you are told to get variety by the quality of loud and soft, etc., and "if it expresseth short sentences" this applies. And you are to make pauses on long notes at the end of sentences.

Rousseau, 1687, in "Maître de Musique et de Viole":

(1)

. . . At this word "movement" there are people who imagine that to give the movement is to follow and keep time; but there is much difference between the one and the other, for one may keep time without entering into the movement.

(2)

. . . You must avoid a profusion of divisions, which only disturb the tune, and obscure its beauty.

(3)

. . . Mark not the beat too much.

The accompanist is told to imitate the irregularities of the beautiful voice.

François Couperin, 1717, "L'Art de toucher le Clavecin":

(1)

. . . We write differently from what we play.

(2)

. . . I find that we confuse Time, or Measure, with what is called Cadence or Movement. Measure defines the quantity

and equality of beats; Cadence is properly the spirit, the soul that must be added.

(3)

. . . Although these Preludes are written in measured time, there is however a customary style which should be followed. . . . Those who will use these set Preludes must play them in an easy manner, WITHOUT BINDING THEMSELVES TO STRICT TIME, unless I should have expressly marked it by the word *mesuré*.

One need seek no further for proof of the recognition of vers libre in music—and this during the "classical period."

I have pointed out elsewhere that the even bar measure is certainly NOT the one and important thing, or even the first important thing; and that European musicians, at least, did not begin to record it until comparatively late in the history of notation. Couperin later notes the barring as a convenience:

. . . One of the reasons why I have measured these Preludes is the facility one will find to teach them or learn them.

That is to say, musical bars are a sort of scaffold to be kicked away when no longer needed.

Disregard of bars is not to be confused with *tempo rubato,* affecting the notes inside a single bar.

. . .

Dolmetsch's wisdom is not confined to the demonstration of a single point of topical interest to the poet. I have not space to quote two whole chapters, or even to elaborate brief quotations like: "You must bind perfectly all that you play." The serious writer of verse will not rest content until he has gone to the source. I do not wish to give the erroneous impression

that old music was all vers libre. I state simply that vers libre exists in old music. Quantzens, 1752, in so far as he is quoted by Dolmetsch, only cautions the player to give the shorter notes "inequality." Christopher Simpson, 1655, is much concerned with physical means of getting a regular beat. His date is interesting. The movement toward regularity in verse during the seventeenth century seems condemnable if one compare only Dryden and Shakespeare, but read a little bad Elizabethan poetry and the reason for it appears. On the other hand, Couperin's feeling for irregularity underlying "classical" forms may give us the clue to a wider unexpressed feeling for a fundamental irregularity which would have made eighteeenth-century classicism, classicism of surface, tolerable to those who felt the underlying variety *as strongly as the first regularizers* may have felt it.

These are historical speculations. If I were writing merely a controversial article I should have stopped with the first quotations from Couperin, concerning vers libre. (I have never claimed that vers libre was the only path of salvation. I felt that it was right and that it had its place with the other modes. It seems that my instinct was not wholly heretical and that the opposition was rather badly informed.) Old gentlemen who talk about "red riot and anarchy," "treachery to the imperium of poesy," etc., etc., would do well to "get up their history" and peruse the codices of their laws.[1]

[1] Cf. *The Quarterly* that hospital for the infirm and aged.

"DUBLINERS" AND MR. JAMES JOYCE[1]

FREEDOM from sloppiness is so rare in contemporary English prose that one might well say simply, "Mr. Joyce's book of short stories is prose free from sloppiness," and leave the intelligent reader ready to run from his study, immediately to spend three and sixpence on the volume.

Unfortunately one's credit as a critic is insufficient to produce this result.

The readers of *The Egoist*, having had Mr. Joyce under their eyes for some months, will scarcely need to have his qualities pointed out to them. Both they and the paper have been very fortunate in his collaboration.

Mr. Joyce writes a clear hard prose. He deals with subjective things, but he presents them with such clarity of outline that he might be dealing with locomotives or with builders' specifications. For that reason one can read Mr. Joyce without feeling that one is conferring a favour. I must put this thing my own way. I know about 168 authors. About once a year I read something contemporary without feeling that I am softening the path for poor Jones or poor Fulano de Tal.

I can lay down a good piece of French writing and pick up a piece of writing by Mr. Joyce without feeling as if my head were being stuffed through a cushion. There are still impressionists about and I dare say they claim Mr. Joyce. I admire impressionist writers. Eng-

[1] "Dubliners," by James Joyce. Grant Richards.

lish prose writers who haven't got as far as impressionism (that is to say, 95 per cent. of English writers of prose and verse) are a bore.

Impressionism has, however, two meanings, or perhaps I had better say, the word "impressionism" gives two different "impressions."

There is a school of prose writers, and of verse writers for that matter, whose forerunner was Stendhal and whose founder was Flaubert. The followers of Flaubert deal in exact presentation. They are often so intent on exact presentation that they neglect intensity, selection, and concentration. They are perhaps the most clarifying and they have been perhaps the most beneficial force in modern writing.

There is another set, mostly of verse writers, who founded themselves not upon anybody's writing but upon the pictures of Monet. Every movement in painting picks up a few writers who try to imitate in words what someone has done in paint. Thus one writer saw a picture by Monet and talked of "pink pigs blossoming on a hillside," and a later writer talked of "slate-blue" hair and "raspberry-coloured flanks."

These "impressionists" who write in imitation of Monet's softness instead of writing in imitation of Flaubert's definiteness, are a bore, a grimy, or perhaps I should say, a rosy, floribund bore.

The spirit of a decade strikes properly upon all of the arts. There are "parallel movements." Their causes and their effects may not seem, superficially, similar.

This mimicking of painting ten or twenty years late, is not in the least the same as the "literary movement" parallel to the painting movement imitated.

The force that leads a poet to leave out a moral reflection may lead a painter to leave out representation.

The resultant poem may not suggest the resultant painting.

Mr. Joyce's merit, I will not say his chief merit but his most engaging merit, is that he carefully avoids telling you a lot that you don't want to know. He presents his people swiftly and vividly, he does not sentimentalise over them, he does not weave convolutions. He is a realist. He does not believe "life" would be all right if we stopped vivisection or if we instituted a new sort of "economics." He gives the thing as it is. He is not bound by the tiresome convention that any part of life, to be interesting, must be shaped into the conventional form of a "story." Since De Maupassant we have had so many people trying to write "stories" and so few people presenting life. Life for the most part does not happen in neat little diagrams and nothing is more tiresome than the continual pretence that it does.

Mr. Joyce's "Araby," for instance, is much better than a "story," it is a vivid waiting.

It is surprising that Mr. Joyce is Irish. One is so tired of the Irish or "Celtic" imagination (or "phantasy" as I think they now call it) flopping about. Mr. Joyce does not flop about. He defines. He is not an institution for the promotion of Irish peasant industries. He accepts an international standard of prose writing and lives up to it.

He gives us Dublin as it presumably is. He does not descend to farce. He does not rely upon Dickensian caricature. He gives us things as they are, not only for Dublin, but for every city. Erase the local names and a few specifically local allusions, and a few historic events of the past, and substitute a few different local names, allusions and events, and these stories could be retold of any town.

That is to say, the author is quite capable of dealing with things about him, and dealing directly, yet these details do not engross him, he is capable of getting at the universal element beneath them.

The main situations of "Madame Bovary" or of "Doña Perfecta" do not depend on local colour or upon local detail, that is their strength. Good writing, good presentation can be specifically local, but it must not depend on locality. Mr. Joyce does not present "types" but individuals. I mean he deals with common emotions which run through all races. He does not bank on "Irish character." Roughly speaking, Irish literature has gone through three phases in our time, the shamrock period, the dove-grey period, and the Kiltartan period. I think there is a new phase in the works of Mr. Joyce. He writes as a contemporary of continental writers. I do not mean that he writes as a faddist, mad for the last note, he does not imitate Strindberg, for instance, or Bang. He is not ploughing the underworld for horror. He is not presenting a macabre subjectivity. He is classic in that he deals with normal things and with normal people. A committee room, Little Chandler, a nonentity, a boarding house full of clerks—these are his subjects and he treats them all in such a manner that they are worthy subjects of art.

Francis Jammes, Charles Vildrac and D. H. Lawrence have written short narratives in verse, trying, it would seem, to present situations as clearly as prose writers have done, yet more briefly. Mr. Joyce is engaged in a similar condensation. He has kept to prose not needing the privilege supposedly accorded to verse to justify his method.

I think that he excels most of the impressionist writers

because of his more rigorous selection, because of his exclusion of all unnecessary detail.

There is a very clear demarcation between unnecessary detail and irrelevant detail. An impressionist friend of mine talks to me a good deal about "preparing effects," and on that score he justifies much unnecessary detail, which is not "irrelevant," but which ends by being wearisome and by putting one out of conceit with his narrative.

Mr. Joyce's more rigorous selection of the presented detail marks him, I think, as belonging to my own generation, that is, to the "nineteen-tens," not to the decade between "the 'nineties" and to-day.

At any rate these stories and the novel now appearing in serial form are such as to win for Mr. Joyce a very definite place among English contemporary prose writers, not merely a place in the "Novels of the Week" column, and our writers of good clear prose are so few that we cannot afford to confuse or to overlook them.

MEDITATIONS [1]

ANENT THE DIFFICULTIES OF GETTING "A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN" PRINTED IN ENGLAND

THOUGHTS, rages, phenomena. I have seen in the course of the morning new ecclesiastical buildings, and I know from the events of the last few months that it is very difficult to get the two most remarkable novels, written in English by our generation, published "through the ordinary channels."

Yet it is more desirable that a nation should have a firm literature than that paste-board nonentities should pour forth rehashed Victoriana on Sundays. Waste! Waste, and again, multiplicitly, waste!

O Christian and benevolent reader, I am not attacking your religion. I am even willing to confess a very considerable respect for its founder, and for Confucius and Mohammed, or any other individual who has striven to implant a germ of intelligence in the soil of the circumjacent stupidity. And I respect him whatever his means and his medium, that is, say, whether he has worked by violent speech, or by suave and persuasive paragraphs, or by pretending to have received his instructions, and gazed unabashed upon the hind side of the intemperate and sensuous J'h'v, on the escarps of Mount Sinai.

Because we, that is to say, you and I and the hypothetical rest of our readers, in normal mood, have

[1] *Egoist*. March 1st, 1916.

no concern with churches, we generally presume that all this pother has been settled long since, and that nobody bothers about it. It is indeed a rare thought that there are thousands of prim, soaped little Tertullians opposing enlightenment, entrenched in their bigotry, mildly, placidly, contentedly entrenched in small livings and in fat livings, and in miserable, degrading curacies, and that they are all sterile, save perhaps in the production of human offspring, whereof there is already a superabundance.

Perhaps 10 per cent. of the activities of the Christian churches are not wholly venal, *mais passons!* And the arts, and good letters, serious writing?

"Oh, you go on too much about art and letters!"

"Bleat about the importance of art!!!" Yes, I have heard these phrases. And very annoying people will "go on about" art.

"In no country in the world do the authorities take such good care of their authors." There are various points of view. There are various tyrannies.

"We are going to have an outbreak of rampant puritanism after the war."

"We shall have a Saturnalia!"

There are various points of view. The monster of intolerance sniffs like a ghoul about the battlefields even. Flammarion or someone said that the sun was about to explode on, I think it was, February the fifth of this year. The end of the world is approaching. Perhaps.

At any rate I am not the first author to remark that the future is unknowable, or at least indefinite and uncertain. Concerning the past we know a little. Concerning "progress," how much?

It is about thirty-nine years since Edmond de Goncourt wrote the preface I quote.

Thirteen years ago my brother and I wrote in an introduction to "Germinie Lacerteux":

"Now that the novel is wider and deeper, now that it begins to be the serious, passionate, living great-form of literary study and of social research, now that it has become, by analysis and psychological inquiry, the history of contemporary ethics-in-action (how shall one render accurately the phrase 'l'histoire morale contemporaine'?), now that the novel has imposed upon itself the studies and duties of science, one may again make a stand for its liberties and its privileges."

There ends his quotation of what they had set down in "the forties."

Now in one's normal mood, in one's normal existence, one takes it for granted that De Goncourt's statement is simple, concise, and accurate. One does not meet people who hold any other view, and one goes on placidly supposing that the question is settled, that it is settled along with Galileo's quondam heresy.

If a man has not in the year of grace 1915 or 1916 arrived at this point of enlightenment carefully marked by the brothers De Goncourt in A. D. 1863, he is not admitted to the acquaintance of anyone worth knowing. I do not say that a person holding a different view would be physically kicked downstairs if he produced a different opinion in an intelligent company; our manners are softened; he would be excreted in some more spiritual manner.

In December, 1876, Edmond de Goncourt added, among others, the following sentences:

In 1877 I come alone and perhaps for the last time to demand these privileges for this new book written with the same feeling of intellectual curiosity and of commiseration for human sufferings.

It has been impossible, at times, not to speak *as a physician,*

as a savant, as a historian. It would be insulting (*injurieux*) to us, the young and serious school of modern novelists, to forbid us to think, to analyse, to describe all that is permitted to others to put into a volume which has on its cover "Study," or any other grave title. You cannot ask us at this time of day to amuse the young lady in the rail-road carriage. I think we have acquired, since the beginning of the century, the right to write for formed men, without the depressing necessity of fleeing to foreign presses, or to have, under a full republican regime, our publishers in Holland, as we did in the time of Louis XIV and Louis XV.

Well, there you have it. We were most of us unborn, or at least mewling and puking, when those perfectly plain, simple and, one would have supposed, obvious sentences were put together.

And yet we are still faced with the problem: Is literature possible in England and America? Is it possible that the great book and the firm book can appear "in normal conditions"? That is to say, under the same conditions that make musical comedy, Edna What's-her-name, Victoria Cross, Clement Shorter, etc., etc., so infernally possible among us!

It seems most unlikely. Of course, five hundred people can do any mortal thing they like, provided it does not imply the coercion of a large body of different people. I mean, for instance, five hundred people can have any sort of drama or novel or literature that they like.

It is possible that the *Mercure de France* has done much to make serious literature possible in France "under present conditions." The Yale University Press in America claims that it selects its books solely on their merit and regardless of public opinion (or perhaps I am wrong, "regardless of their vendibility" may be the meaning of their phrase as I remember it).

And England?

"Oh, Blink is afraid to face the Libraries, I thought so." "The Censor," etc., etc. "We don't think it necessary to superintend the morals of our subscribers." "You can have it by taking a double subscription."

Let me say at once that I make no plea for smuttiness, for an unnecessary erotic glamour, etc., etc. I have what I have been recently informed is a typically "French" disgust at the coarseness of Milton's mind. I have more than once been ridiculed for my prudery.

But if one can't, *parfois,* write "as a physician, as a savant, as a historian," if we can't write plays, novels, poems or any other conceivable form of literature with the scientist's freedom and privilege, with at least the chance of at least the scientist's verity, then where in the world have we got to, and what is the use of anything, *anything?*

TROUBADOURS: THEIR SORTS AND CONDITIONS [1]

The argument whether or no the troubadours are a subject worthy of study is an old and respectable one. It is far too old and respectable to be decided hastily or by one not infallible person. If Guillaume, Count of Peiteus, grandfather of King Richard Cœur de Lion, had not been a man of many energies, there might have been little food for this discussion. He was, as the old book says of him, "of the greatest counts in the world, and he had his way with women." Beside this he made songs for either them or himself or for his more ribald companions. They say also that his wife was Countess of Dia, "fair lady and righteous," who fell in love with Raimbaut d'Aurenga and made him many a song. However that may be, Count Guillaume made composition in verse the best of court fashions, and gave it a social prestige which it held till the accursed crusade of 1208 against the Albigenses. The mirth of Provençal song is at times anything but sunburnt, and the mood is often anything but idle. For example De Born advises the barons to pawn their castles before making war, thus if they won they could redeem them, if they lost the loss fell on the holder of the mortgage.

The forms of the poetry are highly artificial, and as artifice they have still for the serious craftsman an interest, less indeed than they had for Dante, but by no means inconsiderable. No student of the period can doubt that the involved forms, and especially the veiled

[1] The *Quarterly Review*, 1913.

meanings in the "trobar clus," grew out of living conditions, and that these songs played a very real part in love intrigue and in the intrigue preceding warfare. The time had no press and no theatre. If you wish to make love to women in public, and out loud, you must resort to subterfuge; and Guillaume St. Leider even went so far as to get the husband of his lady to do the seductive singing.

If a man of our time be so crotchety as to wish emotional, as well as intellectual, acquaintance with an age so out of fashion as the 12th century, he may try in several ways to attain it. He may read the songs themselves from the old books—from the illuminated vellum —and he will learn what the troubadours meant to the folk of the century just after their own. He will learn a little about their costume from the illuminated capitals. Or he may try listening to the words with the music, for, thanks to Jean Beck and others,[1] it is now possible to hear the old tunes. They are perhaps a little Oriental in feeling, and it is likely that the spirit of Sufism is not wholly absent from their content. Or, again, a man may walk the hill-roads and river roads from Limoges and Charente to Dordogne and Narbonne and learn a little, or more than a little, of what the country meant to the wandering singers. He may learn, or think he learns, why so many canzos open with speech of the weather; or why such a man made war on such and such castles. Once more, he may learn the outlines of these events from the "razzos," or prose paragraphs of introduction, which are sometimes called "lives of the troubadours." And, if he have mind for these latter, he will find in the Bibliothèque Nationale

[1] Walter Morse Rummel's "Neuf Chansons de Troubadours," pub. Augener, ltd., etc.; also the settings by Aubry.

at Paris the manuscript of Miquel de la Tour, written, perhaps, in the author's own handwriting; at least we read "I Miquel de la Tour, scryven, do ye to wit."

Miquel gives us to know that such and such ladies were courted or loved or sung with greater or less good fortune by such and such minstrels of various degree, for one man was a poor vavassour, and another was King Amfos of Aragon; and another, Vidal, was son of a furrier, and sang better than any man in the world; and another was a poor knight that had but part of a castle; and another was a clerk,[1] and he had an understanding with a *borgesa* who had no mind to love him or to keep him, and who became mistress to the Count of Rodez. "Voila l'estat divers d'entre eulx."

There was indeed a difference of estate and fortune between them. The monk, Gaubertz de Poicebot, "was a man of birth; he was of the bishopric of Limozin, son of the castellan of Poicebot. And he was made monk when he was a child in a monastery, which is called Sain Leonart. And he knew well letters, and well to sing, and well *trobar*.[2] And for desire of woman he went forth from the monastery. And he came thence to the man to whom came all who for courtesy wished honour and good deeds—to Sir Savaric de Malleon—and this man gave him the harness of a joglar and a horse and clothing; and then he went through the courts and composed and made good canzos. And he set his heart upon a donzella gentle and fair and made his songs of her, and she did not wish to love him unless he should get himself made a knight and take her to wife. And he told En Savaric how the girl had refused him, wherefore En Savaric made him a knight and gave him land

[1] Raimon de Miraval and Uc Brunecs respectively.
[2] Poetical composition, literally "to find."

and the income from it. And he married the girl and held her in great honour. And it happened that he went into Spain, leaving her behind him. And a knight out of England set his mind upon her and did so much and said so much that he led her with him, and he kept her long time his mistress and then let her go to the dogs (*malamen anar*). And En Gaubertz returned from Spain, and lodged himself one night in the city where she was. And he went out for desire of woman, and he entered the *alberc* of a poor woman; for they told him there was a fine woman within. And he found his wife. And when he saw her, and she him, great was the grief between them and great shame. And he stopped the night with her, and on the morrow he went forth with her and took her to a nunnery where he had her enter. And for this grief he ceased to sing and to compose." If you are minded, as Browning was in his "One Word More," you may search out the song that En Gaubertz made, riding down the second time from Malleon, flushed with the unexpected knighthood.

"Per amor del belh temps suau
E quar fin amor men somo."[1]

"For love of the sweet time and soft" he beseeches this "lady in whom joy and worth have shut themselves and all good in its completeness" to give him grace and the kisses due to him a year since. And he ends in envoi to Savaric.

"Senher savaric larc e bo
Vos troba hom tota fazo

[1] "For love of the fair time and soft,
And because fine love calleth me to it."

Quel vostre ric fag son prezan
El dig cortes e benestan.'' [1]

La Tour has given us seed of drama in the passage above rendered. He has left us also an epic in his straightforward prose. ''Piere de Maensac was of Alverne (Auvergne) a poor knight, and he had a brother named Austors de Maensac, and they both were troubadours and they both were in concord that one should take the castle and the other the *trobar*.'' And presumably they tossed up a *marabotin* or some such obsolete coin, for we read, ''And the castle went to Austors and the poetry to Piere, and he sang of the wife of Bernart de Tierci. So much he sang of her and so much he honoured her that it befell that the lady let herself go (*furar a del*). And he took her to the castle of the Dalfin of Auvergne, and the husband, in the manner of the golden Menelaus, demanded her much, with the church to back him and with the great war that they made. But the Dalfin maintained him (Piere) so that he never gave her up. He (Piere) was a straight man (*dreitz om*) and good company, and he made charming songs, tunes and the words, and good coblas of pleasure.'' And among them is one beginning

''Longa saison ai estat vas amor
Humils e francs, y ai faich son coman.'' [2]

Dante and Browning have created so much interest in Sordello that it may not be amiss to give the brief ac-

[1] "Milord Savaric, generous
To thy last bond, men find thee thus,
That thy rich acts are food for praise
And courtly are thy words and days."
[2] "For a long time have I stood toward Love
Humble and frank, and have done his commands."

count of him as it stands in a manuscript in the Ambrosian library at Milan. "Lo Sordels *si fo di Mantovana.* Sordello was of Mantuan territory of Sirier (this would hardly seem to be Goito), son of a poor cavalier who had name Sier Escort (Browning's El Corte), and he delighted himself in chançons, to learn and to make them. And he mingled with the good men of the court. And he learned all that he could and he made coblas and sirventes. And he came thence to the court of the Count of St. Bonifaci, and the Count honoured him much. And he fell in love with the wife of the Count, in the form of pleasure (*a forma de solatz*), and she with him. (The Palma of Browning's poem and the Cunizza of Dante's.) And it befell that the Count stood ill with her brothers. And thus he estranged himself from her, and from Sier Sceillme and Sier Albrics. Thus her brothers caused her to be stolen from the Count by Sier Sordello and the latter came to stop with them. And he (Sordello) stayed a long time with them in great happiness, and then he went into Proenssa where he received great honours from all the good men and from the Count and from the Countess who gave him a good castle and a wife of gentle birth." (Browning with perfect right alters this ending to suit his own purpose.)

The luck of the troubadours was as different as their ranks, and they were drawn from all social orders. We are led away far indeed from polite and polished society when we come to take note of that Gringoire, Guillem Figiera, "son of a tailor; and he was a tailor; and when the French got hold of Toulouse he departed into Lombardy. And he knew well *trobar* and to sing, and he made himself *joglar* among the townsfolk (*ciutadins*). He was not a man who knew how to carry himself

among the barons or among the better class, but much he got himself welcomed among harlots and slatterns and by inn-keepers and taverners. And if he saw coming a good man of the court, there where he was, he was sorry and grieved at it, and he nearly split himself to take him down a peg (*et ades percussava de lui abaissar*)."

For one razzo that shows an unusual character there are a dozen that say simply that such or such a man was of Manes, or of Cataloigna by Rossilon, or of elsewhere, "a poor cavalier."[1] They made their way by favour at times, or by singing, or by some other form of utility. Ademar of Gauvedan "was of the castle Marvois, son of a poor knight. He was knighted by the lord of Marvois. He was a brave man but could not keep up his estate as knight, and he became jongleur and was respected by all the best people. And later he went into orders at Gran Mon." Elias Cairels "was of Sarlat; ill he sang, ill he composed, ill he played the fiddle and worse he spoke, but he was good at writing out words and tunes. And he was a long time wandering, and when he quitted it, he returned to Sarlat and died there." Perdigo was the son of a fisherman and made his fortune by his art. Peirol was a poor knight who was fitted out by the Dalfin of Auvergne and made love to Sail de Claustra; and all we know of Cercamon is that he made *vers* and *pastorelas* in the old way and that "he went everywhere he could get to." Pistoleta "was a singer for Arnaut of Marvoil, and later he took to *trobar* and made songs with pleasing tunes and he was well received by the best people, although a man of little comfort and of poor endowment and of little

[1] For example, Peire Bermon and Palazol.

stamina. And he took a wife at Marseilles and became a merchant and became rich and ceased going about the courts.'' Guillems the skinny was a joglar of Manes, and the capital letter shows him throwing 3, 5, and 4, on a red dice board. ''Never had he on harness, and what he gained he lost *malamen,* to the taverns and the women. And he ended in a hospital in Spain.''

The razzos have in them the seeds of literary criticism. The speech is, however, laconic. Aimar lo Ners was a gentleman. ''He made such songs as he knew how to.'' Aimeric de Sarlat, a joglar, became a troubadour, ''and yet he made but one song.'' Piere Guillem of Toulouse ''Made good coblas, but he made too many.'' Daude of Pradas made cansos ''per sen de trobar,'' which I think we may translate ''from a mental grasp of the craft.'' ''But they did not move from love, wherefore they had not favour among folk. They were not sung.'' We find also that the labour and skill were divided. One man played the viol most excellently, and another sang, and another spoke his songs to music,[1] and another, Jaufre Rudel, Brebezieu's father-in-law, made ''good tunes with poor words to go with them.''

The troubadour's person comes in for as much free criticism as his performance. Elias fons Salada was ''a fair man verily, as to feature, a joglar, no good troubadour.''[2] But Faidit, a joglar of Uzerche, ''was exceedingly greedy both to drink and to eat, and he became fat beyond measure. And he took to wife a public woman; very fair and well taught she was, but she

[1] Richard of Brebezieu (disia sons).

[2] The "joglar" was the player and singer, the "troubadour" the "finder" or composer of songs and words.

became as big and fat as he was. And she was from a rich town Alest of the Mark of Provenca from the seignory of En Bernart d'Andussa."

One of the noblest figures of the time, if we are to believe the chronicle, was Savaric de Mauleon, a rich baron of Peitieu, whom I have mentioned above, son of Sir Reios de Malleon; "lord was he of Malleon and of Talarnom and of Fontenai, and of castle Aillon and of Boet and of Benaon and of St. Miquel en Letz and of the isle of Ners and of the isle of Mues and of Nestrine and of Engollius and of many other good places." As one may read in the continuation of this notice and verify from the razzos of the other troubadours, "he was of the most open-handed men in the world." He seems to have left little verse save the tenzon with Faidit.

"Behold divers estate between them all!" Yet, despite the difference in conditions of life between the 12th century and our own, these few citations should be enough to prove that the people were much the same, and if the preceding notes do not do this, there is one tale left that should succeed.

"The Vicomte of St. Antoni was of the bishopric of Caortz (Cahors), Lord and Vicomte of St. Antoni; and he loved a noble lady who was wife of the seignor of Pena Dalbeges, of a rich castle and a strong. The lady was gentle and fair and valiant and highly prized and much honoured; and he very valiant and well trained and good at arms and charming, and a good trobaire, and had name Raimons Jordans; and the lady was called the Vicontesse de Pena; and the love of these two was beyond all measure. And it befell that the Viscount went into a land of his enemies and was grievous wounded, so that report held him for dead. And at the news she in great grief went and gave candles at

church for his recovery. And he recovered. And at this news also she had great grief.'' And she fell a-moping, and that was the end of the affair with St. Antoni, and ''thus was there more than one in deep distress.'' ''Wherefore'' Elis of Montfort, wife of William à-Gordon, daughter of the Viscount of Trozena, the glass of fashion and the mould of form, the pride of ''youth, beauty, courtesy,'' and presumably of justice, mercy, long-suffering, and so forth, made him overtures, and successfully. And the rest is a matter much as usual.

If humanity was much the same, it is equally certain that individuals were not any more like one another; and this may be better shown in the uncommunicative *canzoni* than in the razzos. Thus we have a pastoral from the sensitive and little known Joios of Tolosa:

> ''Lautrier el dous temps de pascor
> En una ribeira,''

which runs thus:

''The other day, in the sweet time of Easter, I went across a flat land of rivers hunting for new flowers, walking by the side of the path, and for delight in the greenness of things and because of the complete good faith and love which I bear for her who inspires me, I felt a melting about my heart and at the first flower I found, I burst into tears.

''And I wept until, in a shady place, my eyes fell upon a shepherdess. Fresh was her colour, and she was white as a snow-drift, and she had doves' eyes,''

and the rest of it.

In very different key we find the sardonic Count of

Foix, in a song which begins mildly enough for a spring song:

"Mas qui a flor si vol mesclar,"

and turns swiftly enough to a livelier measure:

"Ben deu gardar lo sieu baston
Car frances sabon grans colps dar
Et albirar ab lor bordon
E nous fizes in carcasses
Ni en genes ni en gascon."

"Let no man lounge amid the flowers
Without a stout club of some kind.
Know ye the French are stiff in stours
And sing not all they have in mind,
So trust ye not in Carcason,
In Genovese, nor in Gascon."

My purpose in all this is to suggest to the casual reader that the Middle Ages did not exist in tapestry alone, nor in the 14th century romances, but that there was a life like our own, no mere sequence of citherns and citoles, nor a continuous stalking about in sendal and diaspre. Men were pressed for money. There was unspeakable boredom in the castles. The chivalric singing was devised to lighten the boredom; and this very singing became itself in due time, in the manner of all things, an ennui.

There has been so much written about the poetry of the best Provençal period, to wit the end of the 12th century, that I shall say nothing of it here, but shall confine the latter part of this essay to a mention of

three efforts, or three sorts of effort which were made to keep poetry alive after the crusade of 1208.

Any study of European poetry is unsound if it does not commence with a study of that art in Provence. The art of quantitative verse had been lost. This loss was due more to ignorance than to actual changes of language, from Latin, that is, into the younger tongues. It is open to doubt whether the Æolic singing was ever comprehended fully even in Rome. When men began to write on tablets and ceased singing to the *barbitos,* a loss of some sort was unavoidable. Propertius may be cited as an exception, but Propertius writes only one metre. In any case the classic culture of the Renaissance was grafted on to medieval culture, a process which is excellently illustrated by Andreas Divus Iustinopolitanus' translation of the Odyssey into Latin. It is true that each century after the Renaissance has tried in its own way to come nearer the classic, but, if we are to understand that part of our civilisation which is the art of verse, we must begin at the root, and that root is medieval. The poetic art of Provence paved the way for the poetic art of Tuscany; and to this Dante bears sufficient witness in his treatise "De Vulgari Eloquio." The heritage of art is one thing to the public and quite another to the succeeding artists. The artist's inheritance from other artists can be little more than certain enthusiasms, which usually spoil his first work; and a definite knowledge of the modes of expression, which knowledge contributes to perfecting his more mature performance. All this is a matter of technique.

After the compositions of Vidal and of Rudel and of Ventadour, of Bornelh and Bertrans de Born and Arnaut Daniel, there seemed little chance of doing distinctive work in the "canzon de l'amour courtois." There was

no way, or at least there was no man in Provence capable of finding a new way of saying in seven closely rhymed strophes that a certain girl, matron or widow was like a certain set of things, and that the troubadour's virtues were like another set, and that all this was very sorrowful or otherwise, and that there was but one obvious remedy. Richard of Brebezieu had done his best for tired ears; he had made similes of beasts and of the stars which got him a passing favour. He had compared himself to the fallen elephant and to the self-piercing pelican, and no one could go any further. Novelty is reasonably rare even in modes of decadence and revival. The three devices tried for poetic restoration in the early 13th century were the three usual devices. Certain men turned to talking art and æsthetics and attempted to dress up the folk-song. Certain men tried to make verse more engaging by stuffing it with an intellectual and argumentative content. Certain men turned to social satire. Roughly, we may divide the interesting work of the later Provençal period into these three divisions. As all of these men had progeny in Tuscany, they are, from the historical point of view, worth a few moments' attention.

The first school is best represented in the work of Giraut Riquier of Narbonne. His most notable feat was the revival of the *Pastorela.* The Pastorela is a poem in which a knight tells of having met with a shepherdess or some woman of that class, and of what fortune and conversation befell him. The form had been used long before by Marcabrun, and is familiar to us in such poems as Guido Cavalcanti's "In un boschetto trovai pastorella," or in Swinburne's "An Interlude." Guido, who did all things well, whenever the fancy took him,

has raised this form to a surpassing excellence in his poem "Era in pensier d'Amor, quand' io trovai." Riquier is most amusing in his account of the inn-mistress at Sant Pos de Tomeiras, but even there he is less amusing than was Marcabrun when he sang of the shepherdess in "L'autrier iost' una sebissa." Riquier has, however, his place in the apostolic succession; and there is no reason why Cavalcanti and Riquier should not have met while the former was on his journey to Campostella, although Riquier may as easily have been in Spain at the time. At any rate the Florentine noble would have heard the *pastorelas* of Giraut; and this may have set him to his *ballate,* which seem to date from the time of his meeting with Mandetta in Toulouse. Or it may have done nothing of the kind. The only more or less settled fact is that Riquier was then the best-known living troubadour and near the end of his course.

The second, and to us the dullest of the schools, set to explaining the nature of love and its effects. The normal modern will probably slake all his curiosity for this sort of work in reading one such poem as the King of Navarre's "De Fine amour vient science e beautez." "Ingenium nobis ipsa puella facit," as Propertius put it, or *anglice:*

"Knowledge and beauty from true love are wrought,
And likewise love is born from this same pair;
These three are one to whoso hath true thought," etc.

There might be less strain if one sang it. This peculiar variety of flame was carried to the altars of Bologna, whence Guinicello sang:

"Al cor gentil ripara sempre amore,
Come l'augello in selva alla verdura."

And Cavalcanti wrote: "A lady asks me, wherefore I wish to speak of an accident[1] which is often cruel." Upon this poem there are nineteen great and learned commentaries. And Dante, following in his elders' footsteps, has burdened us with a "Convito."

The third school is the school of satire, and is the only one which gives us a contact with the normal life of the time. There had been Provençal satire before Piere Cardinal; but the sirventes of Sordello and de Born were directed for the most part against persons, while the Canon of Clermont drives rather against conditions. In so far as Dante is critic of morals, Cardinal must be held as his forerunner. Miquel writes of him as follows:

"Peire Cardinal was of Veillac of the city Pui Ma Donna, and he was of honourable lineage, son of a knight and a lady. And when he was little his father put him for canon in the *canonica major* of Pui; and he learnt letters, and he knew well how to read and to sing; and when he was come to man's estate he had high knowledge of the vanity of this world, for he felt himself gay and fair and young. And he made many fair arguments and fair songs. And he made cansos, but he made only a few of these, and sirventes; and he did best in the said sirventes where he set forth many fine arguments and fair examples for those who understand them; for much he rebuked the folly of this world and much he reproved the false clerks, as his sirventes show. And he went through the courts of kings and of noble

[1] *Accidente*, used as a purely technical term of his scholastic philosophy.

barons and took with him his joglar who sang the sirventes. And much was he honoured and welcomed by my lord the good king of Aragon and by honourable barons. And I, master Miquel de la Tour, escruian (scribe), do ye to wit that N. Peire Cardinal when he passed from this life was nearly a hundred. And I, the aforesaid Miquel, have written these sirventes in the city of Nemze (Nimes) and here are written some of his sirventes."

If the Vicontesse de Pena reminds us of certain ladies with whom we have met, these sirventes of Cardinal may well remind us that thoughtful men have in every age found almost the same set of things or at least the same sort of things to protest against; if it be not a corrupt press or some monopoly, it is always some sort of equivalent, some conspiracy of ignorance and interest. And thus he says, "Li clerc si fan pastor." The clerks pretend to be shepherds, but they are wolfish at heart.

If he can find a straight man, it is truly matter for song; and so we hear him say of the Duke of Narbonne, who was, apparently, making a fight for honest administration:

"Coms raymon duc de Narbona
Marques de proensa
Vostra valors es tan bona
Que tot lo mon gensa,
Quar de la mar de bayona
En tro a valenca
Agra gent falsae fellona
Lai ab vil temensa,
Mas vos tenetz vil lor
Q'n frances bevedor

Plus qua[1] perditz austor
No vos fan temensa."[2]

Cardinal is not content to spend himself in mere abuse, like the little tailor Figeira, who rhymes Christ's "mortal pena" with

"Car voletz totzjors portar la borsa plena,"

which is one way of saying, "Judas!" to the priests. He, Cardinal, sees that the technique of honesty is not always utterly simple.

"Li postilh, legat elh cardinal
Fa cordon tug, y an fag establir
Que qui nos pot de traisson esdir,"

which may mean, "The pope and the legate and the cardinal have twisted such a cord that they have brought things to such a pass that no one can escape committing treachery." As for the rich:

[1] Here lies the difficulty of all this sort of scholarship! Is this "qua" or "que"? The change of the letter will shift us into irony.

[2] "Now is come from France what one did not ask for"—he is addressing the man who is standing against the North—

"Count Raymon, Duke of Narbonne,
Marquis of Provence,
Your valour is sound enough
To make up for the cowardice of
All the rest of the gentry.
For from the sea at Bayonne,
Even to Valence,
Folk would have given in (sold out),
But you hold them in scorn,
[Or, reading 'l'aur,' 'scorn the gold.']
So that the drunken French
Alarm you no more
Than a partridge frightens a hawk."

"Li ric home an pietat tan gran
Del autre gen quon ac caym da bel
Que mais volon tolre q̄ lop no fan
E mais mentir que tozas de bordelh." [1]

Of the clergy, "A tantas vey baylia," "So much the more do I see clerks coming into power that all the world will be theirs, whoever objects. For they'll have it with taking or with giving" (i.e. by granting land, belonging to one man, to someone else who will pay allegiance for it, as in the case of De Montfort), "or with pardon or with hypocrisy; or by assault or by drinking and eating; or by prayers or by praising the worse; or with God or with devilry." We find him putting the age-long query about profit in the following.

"He may have enough harness
And sorrel horses and bays;
Tower, wall, and palace,
May he have
—The rich man denying his God."

The stanza runs very smoothly to the end

"Si mortz no fos
Elh valgra per un cen." [2]

The modern Provençal enthusiast who is in raptures at the idea of chivalric love (a term which he usually

[1] "The rich men have such pity
For other folk—about as much as Cain had for Abel.
For they would like to leave less than the wolves do,
And to lie more than girls in a brothel."

[2] "A hundred men he would be worth
Were there no death."

misunderstands), and who is little concerned with the art of verse, has often failed to notice how finely the sound of Cardinal's poems is matched with their meaning. There is a lash and sting in his timbre and in his movement. Yet the old man is not always bitter; or, if he is bitter, it is with the bitterness of a torn heart and not of a hard one. It is so we find him in the sirvente beginning:

"As a man weepeth for his son or for his father,
Or for his friend when death has taken him,
So do I mourn for the living who do their own ill,
False, disloyal, felon, and full of ill-fare,
Deceitful, breakers-of-pact,
Cowards, complainers,
Highwaymen, thieves-by-stealth, turn-coats,
Betrayers, and full of treachery,
Here where the devil reigns
And teaches them to act thus."

He is almost the only singer of his time to protest against the follies of war. As here:

"Ready for war, as night is to follow the sun,
Readier for it than is the fool to be cuckold
When he has first plagued his wife!
And war is an ill thing to look upon,
And I know that there is not one man drawn into it
But his child, or his cousin or someone akin to him
Prays God that it be given over."

He says plainly, in another place, that the barons make war for their own profit, regardless of the peasants. "Fai mal senher vas los sieu." His sobriety is not to

be fooled with sentiment either martial or otherwise. There is in him little of the fashion of feminolatry, and the gentle reader in search of trunk-hose and the light guitar had better go elsewhere. As for women: "L'una fai drut."

"One turns leman for the sake of great possessions;
And another because poverty is killing her,
And one hasn't even a shift of coarse linen;
And another has two and does likewise.
And one gets an old man—and she is a young wench,
And the old woman gives the man an elixir."

As for justice, there is little now: "If a rich man steal by chicanery, he will have right before Constantine (i.e. by legal circumambience), but the poor thief may go hang." And after this there is a passage of pity and of irony fine-drawn as much of his work is, for he keeps the very formula that De Born had used in his praise of battle, "Belh mes quan vey"; and, perhaps, in Sir Bertrans' time even the Provençal wars may have seemed more like a game, and may have appeared to have some element of sport and chance in them. But the 12th century had gone, and the spirit of the people was weary, and the old canon's passage may well serve as a final epitaph on all that remained of silk thread and *cisclatons,* of viol and *gai saber.*

"Never again shall we see the Easter come in so fairly,
That was wont to come in with pleasure and with song.
No! but we see it arrayed with alarms and excursions,
Arrayed with war and dismay and fear,
Arrayed with troops and with cavalcades,
Oh, yes, it's a fine sight to see holder and shepherd
Going so wretched that they know not where they are."

NOTES ON ELIZABETHAN CLASSICISTS

I

The reactions and "movements" of literature are scarcely, if ever, movements against good work or good custom. Dryden and the precursors of Dryden did not react against "Hamlet." If the eighteenth-century movement toward regularity is among those least sympathetic to the public of our moment, it is "historically justifiable," even though the katachrestical vigours of Marlowe's "Hero and Leander" may not be enough to "explain" the existence of Pope. A single faulty work showing great powers would hardly be enough to start a "reaction"; only the mediocrity of a given time can drive the more intelligent men of that time to "break with tradition."

I take it that the phrase "break with tradition" is currently used to mean "desert the more obvious imbecilities of one's immediate elders"; at least, it has had that meaning in the periodical mouth for some years. Only the careful and critical mind will seek to know how much tradition inhered in the immediate elders.

Vaguely in some course of literature we heard of "the old fourteeners," vulgariter, the metre of the "Battle of Ivry." "Hamlet" could not have been written in this pleasing and popular measure. The "classics," however, appeared in it. For Court ladies and cosmopolitan heroes it is perhaps a little bewildering, but in the mouth of Oenone:

The Heroycal Epistles of the learned Poet Publius Ovidius Naso. In English verse: set out and translated by George Tuberuile. 1567. London: Henry Denham.

OENONE TO PARIS

To Paris that was once her owne
though now it be not so,
From Ida, Oenon greeting sendes
as these hir letters show,
May not thy nouel wife endure
that thou my Pissle reade.
That they with Grecian fist were wrought
thou needste not stand in dreade.

Pegasian nymph renounde in Troie,
Oenone hight by name,
Of thee (of thee that were mine owne), complaine
if thou permit the same,
What froward god doth seeke to barre
Oenone to be thine?
Or by what guilt have I deserude
that Paris should decline?
Take paciently deserude woe
and never grutch at all:
But undeserued wrongs will grieve
a woman at the gall.

Scarce were thou of so noble fame,
as platly doth appeare:
When I (the offspring of a floud)
did choose the for my feere.

And thou, who now art Priams sonne
(all reuerence layde apart)
Were tho a Hyard to beholde
when first thou wanste my heart.
How oft have we in shaddow laine
whylst hungrie flocks have fedde?
How oft have we of grasse and greanes
preparde a homely bedde?
How oft on simple stacks of strawe
and bennet did we rest?
How oft the dew and foggie mist
our lodging hath opprest?
Who first discouerde thee the holtes
and Lawndes of lurcking game?
Who first displaid thee where the whelps
lay sucking of their Dame?
I sundrie tymes have holpe to pitch
thy toyles for want of ayde:
And forst thy Hounds to climbe the hilles
that gladly would have stayde.

One boysterous Beech Oenone's name
in outward barke doth beare:
And with thy caruing knife is cut
OENON, every wheare.
And as the trees in tyme doe ware
so doth encrease my name:
Go to, grow on, erect your selves
helpe to aduance my fame.

There growes (I minde it uerie well)
upon a banck, a tree
Whereon ther doth a fresh recorde
and will remaine of mee,

Live long thou happie tree, I say,
that on the brinck doth stande;
And hast ingraued in thy barke
these wordes, with Paris hande:

When Pastor Paris shall reuolte,
and Oenon's love forgoe:
Then Xanthus waters shall recoyle,
and to their Fountaines floe.
Now Ryuer backward bend thy course,
let Xanthus streame retier:
For Paris hath renounst the Nymph
and prooude himself a lier.
That cursed day bred all my doole,
the winter of my joy,
With cloudes of froward fortune fraught
procurde me this annoy;

When cankred crafte Iuno came
with Venus (Nurce of Love)
And Pallas eke, that warlike wench,
their beauties pride to proue.

. . . . . .

The pastoral note is at least not unpleasing, and the story more real than in the mouths of the later poets, who enliven us with the couplet to the tune:

Or Paris, who, to steal that daintie piece,
Traveled as far as 'twas 'twixt Troy and Greece.

The old versions of Ovid are, I think, well worth a week or so random reading. Turning from the Heroides I find this in a little booklet said to be "printed abroad" and undated. It bears "C. Marlow" on the title page.

AMORUM [1]

Now on the sea from her olde loue comes shee
That drawes the day from heaven's cold axle-tree,
Aurora whither slidest thou down againe,
And byrdes from Memnon yeerly shall be slaine.

Now in her tender arms I sweetlie bide,
If euer, now well lies she by my side,
The ayre is colde, and sleep is sweetest now,
And byrdes send foorth shril notes from every bow.
Whither runst thou, that men and women loue not,
Holde in thy rosie horses that they moue not.
Ere thou rise stars teach seamen where to saile,
But when thou comest, they of their course faile.
Poore trauailers though tired, rise at thy sight,
The painful Hinde by thee to fild is sent,
Slow oxen early in the yoke are pent.
Thou cousnest boyes of sleep, and dost betray them
To Pedants that with cruel lashes pay them.

. . . . . .

Any fault is more pleasing than the current fault of the many. One should read a few bad poets of every era, as one should read a little trash of every contemporary nation, if one would know the worth of the good in either.

Turning from translations, for a moment, to *The Shepherde's Starre* (1591), for the abandonment of syntax and sense, for an interesting experiment in metric, for beautiful lines astray in a maze of unsense, I find the incoherent conclusion of much incoherence, where

[1] *Amorum*, lib. i, elegia 13.

Amarylis says: "In the meane while let my Roundilay end my follie"; and tilts at the age old bogie of "Sapphics," Aeolium Carmen, which perhaps Catullus alone of imitators has imitated with success.

THE SHEPHERDES STARRE, 1591

Amaryllis. In the meane while let this my Roundilay end my follie:

Sith the nymphs are thought to be happie creatures,
For that at faier *Helicon* a Fountaine,
Where all use like white Ritch iuorie foreheads
Daily to sprinckle,

Sith the quire of Muses atend *Diana,*
Ever use to bathe heauie thoughts refyning,
With the Silver skinne, Civet and Mir using
For their adornment,

Sith my sacred Nymphs priuiledge abateth,
Cause *Dianas* grace did elect the *Myrtle,*
To be pride of every branch in order
last of her handmaides;

Should then I thus liue to behold euerted
Skies, with impure eyes in a fountaine harboured
Where *Titans* honor seated is as under
All the beholders?

Helpe wofull *Ecco,* reabound relenting,
That *Dianas* grace on her helpe recalling,
May well heare thy voice to bewaile, reanswere
Faire *Amaryllis.*

Fairer in deede then *Galatea*, fairest
Of *Dianas* troope to bewitch the wisest,
With amasing eye to abandon humors
of any gallants,

Shee *Thetis* faier, *Galataea* modest,
—Albeit some say in a Chrystal often,
Tis a rule, there lurketh a deadly poyson,
Tis but a false rule.

For what Yse is hid in a Diamond Ring,
Where the wise beholder hath eyes refusing,
Allabasters vaines to no workman hidden,
Gold to no Touchstone.

There bedeckes fairest *Rosamond* the fountaine,
Where resorts those greene *Driades* the waterie
Nimphs, of olive plants recreat by *Phaebus*
Till they be maried.

So beginning ends the report of her fame,
Whose report passing any pennes relation,
Doth entreat her loue, by reinspiration
To dull heads yeelding faer eies reflection,
Still to be present.

Surely among poems containing a considerable amount of beauty, this is one of the worst ever written. Patient endeavour will reveal to the reader a little more coherence and syntax than is at first glance apparent, but from this I draw no moral conclusion.

For all half-forgotten writing there is, to my mind, little criticism save selection. "Those greene Driades"; Oenone, "offspring of a floud"; the music of the Elegy must make their own argument.

II

A great age of literature is perhaps always a great age of translations; or follows it. The Victorians in lesser degree had Fitzgerald, and Swinburne's Villon, and Rossetti. One is at first a little surprised at the importance which historians of Spanish poetry give to Boscan, but our histories give our own translators too little. And worse, we have long since fallen under the blight of the Miltonic or noise tradition, to a stilted dialect in translating the classics, a dialect which imitates the idiom of the ancients rather than seeking their meaning, a state of mind which aims at "teaching the boy his latin" or greek or whatever it may be, but has long since ceased to care for the beauty of the original; or which perhaps thinks "appreciation" obligatory, and the meaning and content mere accessories.

Golding was no inconsiderable poet, and the Marlow of the translations has beauties no whit inferior to the Marlowe of original composition. In fact, the skill of the translations forbids one to balk at the terminal "e." We conclude the identity without seeking through works of reference.

Compare (pardon the professional tone whereof I seem unable to divest myself in discussing these matters), compare the anonymous rather unskilled work in the translation of *Sixe Idillia,* with Marlow's version of *Amorum,* lib. iii, 13.

The XVIII Idillion

HELLENS EPITHALAMION[1]

In Sparta long agoe, where Menelaus wore the crowne,
Twelve noble Virgins, daughters to the greatest in the towne,
All dight upon their haire in Crowtoe garlands fresh and greene,
Danst at the chamber doore of Helena the Queene,
What time this Menelay, the younger Sonne of Atreus,
Did marry with this louely daughter of Prince Tyndarus.
And therewithal at eue, a wedding song they jointly sung,
With such a shuffling of their feete, that all the Pallace rung.

. . . . . .

CYCLOPS TO GALATEA THE WATER-NYMPH

IX Idillion

. . . . . .

O Apple, sweet, of thee, and of myself I use to sing,
And that at midnight oft, for thee, aleavne faunes up I bring,
All great with young, and foure beares whelps, I nourish up for thee.
But come thou hither first, and thou shalt have them all of me.

[1] *Sixe Idillia*, published by Joseph Barnes, Oxford, 1588; 100 copies reprinted by H. Daniel, Oxford, 1883.

And let the blewish colorde Sea beat on the shore so nie.
The night with me in cave, thou shalt consume more pleasantlie.
There are the shadie Baies, and there tall Cypres-trees doe sprout,
And there is Ivie blacke, and fertill Vines are al about.
Coole water there I haue, distilled of the whitest snowe,
A drinke divine, which out of wooddy Aetna mount doth flowe.
In these respects, who in the Sea and waues would rather be?
But if I seem as yet, too rough and sauage unto thee,
Great store of Oken woode I have, and never quenched fire;
And I can well endure my soul to burn with thy desire,
With this my onely eie, then which I nothing think more trimme.
Now woe is me, my mother bore not me with finns to swimme,
That I might dive to thee,
. . . . . .

The "shuffling of their feete" is pleasing, but the Cyclops speaks perhaps too much in his own vein. Marlow is much more dexterous.

AMORUM [1]

Ad amicam si pecatura est, ut occulte peccat

Seeing thou are faire, I bar not thy false playing,
But let not me poore soule wit of thy straying.

[1] *Amorum*, lib. iii, elegia 13. These translations are reprinted in the Clarendon Press edition of Marlowe's Works, 1910.

Nor do I give thee counsaile to liue chast
But that thou wouldst dissemble when 'tis past.
She hath not trod awry that doth deny it,
Such as confesse haue lost their good names by it.
What madness ist to tell night sports by day,
Or hidden secrets openly to bewray,
The strumpet with the stranger will not do,
Before the room be cleare, and dore put too.
Will you make shipwracke of your honest name
And let the world be witnesse of the same?
Be more aduisde, walke as a puritaine,
And I shall think you chast do what you can.
Slippe still, onely deny it when tis done,
And before people immodest speeches shun,
The bed is for lasciuious toyings meete,
There use all toyes, and treade shame under feete,
When you are up and drest, be sage and graue,
And in the bed hide all the faults you haue.
Be not a shamed to strippe you being there,
And mingle thighes, mine ever yours to beare,
There in your rosie lips my tongue intomb,
Practise a thousand sports when there you come,
Forbare no wanton words you there would speake,
And with your pastime let the bedsted creake.
But with your robes, put on an honest face,
And blush and seeme as you were full of grace.
Deceiue all, let me erre, and think I am right
And like a wittal, thinke thee uoide of slight.

The reader, if he can divert his thought from matter to manner, may well wonder how much the eighteenth century authors have added, or if they added anything save a sort of faculty for systematization of product, a power to repeat certain effects regularly and at will.

But Golding's book published before all these others will give us more matter for reverie. One wonders, in reading it, how much more of the Middle Ages was Ovid. We know well enough that they read him and loved him more than the more Tennysonian Virgil.

Yet how great was Chaucer's debt to the Doctor Amoris? That we will never know. Was Chaucer's delectable style simply the first Ovid in English? Or, as likely, is Golding's Ovid a mirror of Chaucer? Or is a fine poet ever translated until another his equal invents a new style in a later language? Can we, for our part, know our Ovid until we find him in Golding? Is there one of us so good at his latin, and so ready in imagination that Golding will not throw upon his mind shades and glamours inherent in the original text, which had for all that escaped him? Is any foreign speech ever our own, ever so full of beauty as our *lingua materna* (whatever *lingua materna* that may be)? Or is not a new beauty created, an old beauty doubled when the overchange is well done?

Will

> . . . cum super atria velum
> Candida purpurium simulatus inficit umbras

quite give us the "scarlet curtain" of the simile in the Flight from Hippomenes? Perhaps all these things are personal matters, and not matter for criticism or discussion. But it is certain that "we" have forgotten our Ovid, "we" being the reading public, the readers of English poetry, have forgotten our Ovid since Golding went out of print.

METAMORPHOSIS [1]

While in this garden Proserpine was taking hir pastime,
In gathering eyther Violets blew, or Lillies white as Lime,
And while of Maidenly desire she fillde hir Haund and Lap,
Endeauoring to outgather hir companions there. By hap
Dis spide her: lovde her: caught her up: and all at once well nere.
So hastie, hote, and swift a thing is Loue as may appeare.
The Ladie with a wailing voyce afright did often call
Hir mother and hir waiting Maides, but Mother most of all.

. . . . . .

ATALANTA [2]

And from the Citie of Tegea there came the Paragone
Of Lycey forrest, Atalant, a goodly Ladie, one
Of Schœnyes daughters, then a Maide. The garment she did weare
A brayded button fastned at hir gorget. All hir heare
Untrimmed in one only knot was trussed. From hir left
Side hanging on hir shoulder was an Ivorie quiuer deft:

[1] *Metamorphosis*, by Arthur Golding, 1567. The Fyft booke. Reprint of 300 copies by De la More Press, in folio.
[2] *Atalanta*. The Eight booke.

Which being full of arrowes, made a clattering as she went.
And in hir right hand she did beare a bow already bent.
Hir furniture was such as this. Hir countnance and hir grace
Was such as in a Boy might well be cald a Wenches face.

. . . . . .

THE HUNTING

Assoone as that the men came there, some pitched the toyles,
Some tooke the couples from the Dogs, and some pursude the foyles
In places where the swine had tract: desiring for to spie
Their owne destruction. Now there was a hollow bottom by,
To which the watershots of raine from all the high grounds drew.
Within the compasse of this pond great store of Oysters grew:
And Sallowes lithe, and flackring flags, and moorish Rushes eke,
And lazie Reedes on little shankes, and other baggage like.
From hence the Bore was rowzed out, and fiersly forth he flies
Among the thickest of his foes as thunder from the Skies.

FLIGHT FROM HIPPOMENES

. . . now while Hippomenes
Debates theis things within himself and other like to these,
The Damzell ronnes as if her feete were wings. And though that shee
Did fly as swift as arrow from a Turkye bowe: yit hee
More woonded at hir beawtye than at the swiftnesse of her pace
Her ronning greatly did augment her beawtye and her grace.
The wynd ay whisking from her feete the labells of her socks
Uppon her back as whyght as snowe did tosse her golden locks,
And eke thembroydred garters that were tyde beneathe her ham.
A redness mixt with whyght uppon her tender body cam,
As when a scarlet curtaine streynd ageinst a playstred wall
Doth cast like shadowe, making it seeme ruddye therewith all.

Reality and particularization! The Elizabethans themselves began the long series of sins against them. In Ovid at least they are not divorced from sweeping imagination as in the *Fasti* (v. 222):

Unius tellus ante coloris erat;

or in the opening of the *Metamorphoses,* as by Golding:

Which Chaos hight, a huge rude heape and nothing
else but even
A heavie lump and clottred clod of seedes

. . . . . .

Nor yet the earth amiddes the ayre did hang by wondrous slight
Just peysed by hir proper weight. Nor winding in and out
Did Amphitrytee with her armes embrace the earth about,
For where was earth, was sea and ayre, so was the earth unstable.
The ayre all darke, the sea likewise to beare a ship unable.

. . . . . .

The suttle ayre to flickering fowles and birdes he hath assignde.

I throw in the last line for the quality of one adjective, and close this section of excerpts with a bit of fun anent Bacchus.

ADDRESS TO BACCHUS. IV

Thou into Sea didst send
The Tyrrhene shipmen. Thou with bittes the sturdy neckes dost bend
Of spotted Lynxes: throngs of Fownes and Satyres on thee tend,
And that old Hag that with a staff his staggering limmes doth stay
Scarce able on his Asse to sit for reeling every way.

Thou comest not in any place but that is hearde the noyse
Of gagling womens tatling tongues and showting out of boyes.
With sound of Timbrels, Tabors, Pipes, and Brazen pannes and pots
Confusedly among the rout that in thine Orgies trots.

III

The sin or error of Milton—let me leave off vague expressions of a personal active dislike, and make my yearlong diatribes more coherent. Honour where it is due! Milton undoubtedly built up the sonority of the blank verse paragraph in our language. But he did this at the cost of his idiom. He tried to turn English into latin; to use an uninflected language as if it were an inflected one, neglecting the genius of English, distorting its fibrous manner, making schoolboy translations of latin phrases: "Him who disobeys me disobeys."

I am leaving apart all my disgust with what he has to say, his asinine bigotry, his beastly hebraism, the coarseness of his mentality, I am dealing with a technical matter. All this clause structure modelled on latin rhetoric, borrowed and thrust into sonorities which are sometimes most enviable.

The sin of vague pompous words is neither his own sin nor original. Euphues and Gongora were before him. The Elizabethan audience was interested in large speech. "Multitudinous seas incarnadine" caused as much thrill as any epigram in *Lady Windermere's Fan* or *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The Dramatists had started this manner, Milton but continued in their

wake, adding to their high-soundingness his passion for latinization, the latinization of a language peculiarly unfitted for his sort of latinization. Golding in the ninth year of Elizabeth can talk of "Charles his wane" in translating Ovid, but Milton's fields are "irriguous," and worse, and much more notably displeasing, his clause structure is a matter of "quem's," "cui's," and "quomodo's."

Another point in defence of Golding: his constant use of "did go," "did say," etc., is not fustian and mannerism; it was contemporary speech, though in a present-day poet it is impotent affectation and definite lack of technique. I am not saying "Golding is a greater poet than Milton"; these quantitative comparisons are in odium. Milton is the most unpleasant of English poets, and he has certain definite and analysable defects. His unpleasantness is a matter of personal taste. His faults of language are subject to argument just as are the faults of any other poet's language. His popularity has been largely due to his bigotry, but there is no reason why that popular quality should be for ever a shield against criticism. His real place is nearer to Drummond of Hawthorneden than to "Shakespear" and "Dante" whereto the stupidity of our forbears tried to exalt him.

His short poems are his defenders' best stronghold, and it will take some effort to show that they are better than Drummond's *Phoebus Arise.* In all this I am not insisting on "Charles his wane" as the sole mode of translation. I point out that Golding was endeavouring to convey the sense of the original to his readers. He names the thing of his original author, by the name most germane, familiar, homely, to his hearers. He is intent on conveying a meaning, and not on bemusing

them with a rumble. And I hold that the real poet is sufficiently absorbed in his content to care more for the content than the rumble; and also that Chaucer and Golding are more like to find the *mot juste* (whether or no they held any theories there-anent) than were for some centuries their successors, saving the author of "Hamlet."

Beside the fustian tradition, the tradition of *cliché* phrases, copies on greek and latin clause structure and phrase structure, two causes have removed the classics from us. On one hand we have ceased to read greek with the aid of latin cribs, and latin is the only language into which any great amount of greek can be in a lively fashion set over; secondly, there is no discrimination in classical studies. The student is told that all the classics are excellent and that it is a crime to think about what he reads. There is no use pretending that these literatures are read as literature. An apostolic succession of school teachers has become the medium of distribution.

The critical faculty is discouraged, the poets are made an exercise, a means of teaching the language. Even in this there is a great deal of buncombe. It is much better that a man should use a crib, and know the content of his authors than that he should be able to recite all the rules in Allen and Greenough's grammar. Even the teaching by rules is largely a hoax. The latin had certain case feelings. For the genitive he felt source, for the dative indirect action upon, for the accusative direct action upon, for the ablative all other periphoric sensation, i.e. it is less definitely or directly the source than the genitive, it is contributory circumstance; lump the locative with it, and one might call it the "circum-

stantial." Where it and the dative have the same form, we may conclude that there was simply a general indirect case.

The humanizing influence of the classics depends more on a wide knowledge, a reading knowledge, than on an ability to write exercises in latin; it is ridiculous to pretend that a reading knowledge need imply more than a general intelligence of the minutiæ of grammar. I am not assuming the position of those who objected to Erasmus's "tittle-tattles," but there is a sane order of importance.

When the classics were a new beauty and ecstasy people cared a damn sight more about the meaning of the authors, and a damn sight less about their grammar and philology.

We await, *vei jauzen lo jorn,* the time when the student will be encouraged to say which poems bore him to tears, and which he thinks rubbish, and whether there is any beauty in "Maecenas sprung from a line of kings." It is bad enough that so much of the finest poetry in the world should be distributed almost wholly through classrooms, but if the first question to be asked were: "Gentlemen, are these verses worth reading?" instead of "What is the mood of 'manet'?" if, in short, the professor were put on his mettle to find poems worth reading instead of given the *facilem discensum,* the shoot, the supine shoot, of grammatical discussion, he might more dig out the vital spots in his authors, and meet from his class a less persistent undercurrent of conviction that all latin authors are a trial.

The uncritical scholarly attitude has so spread, that hardly a living man can tell you at what points the latin authors surpass the greek, yet the comparison of their differences is full of all fascinations. Because

Homer is better than Virgil, and Aeschylus, presumably, than Seneca, there has spread a superstition that the mere fact of a text being in greek makes it of necessity better than a text written in latin—which is buncombe.

Ovid indubitably added and invented much which is not in greek, and the greeks might be hard put to find a better poet among themselves than is their disciple Catullus. Is not Sappho, in comparison, a little, just a little Swinburnian?

I do not state this as dogma, but one should be open to such speculation.

I know that all classic authors have been authoritatively edited and printed by Teubner, and their wording ultimately settled at Leipzig, but all questions concerning "the classics" are not definitely settled, cold-storaged, and shelved.

I may have been an ensanguined fool to spend so much time on mediæval literature, or the time so "wasted" may help me to read Ovid with greater insight. I may have been right or wrong to read renaissance latinists, instead of following the professorial caution that "after all if one confined oneself to the accepted authors one was sure of reading good stuff, whereas there was a risk in hunting about among the unknown."

I am much more grateful for the five minutes during which a certain lecturer emphasized young Icarus begorming himself with Daedalus' wax than for all the dead hours he spent in trying to make me a scholar.

> modo quas vaga moverat aura,
> Captabat plumas: flavam modo pollice ceram
> Moliabat; lususque suo mirabile patris
> Impediabat opus.

"Getting in both of their ways." My plagiarism was from the life and not from Ovid, the difference is perhaps unimportant.

Yet if after sixteen years a professor's words came back to one, it is perhaps important that the classics should be humanly, rather than philologically taught, even in class-rooms. A barbaric age given over to *education* agitates for their exclusion and desuetude. Education is an onanism of the soul. Philology will be ascribed to De la Sade.

And there is perhaps more hope for the débutante who drawls in the last fashionable and outwearied die-away cadence "Ayh! Trois Contes? THAT'S a good buk," than for the connoisseur stuffed full of catalogues; able to date any author and enumerate all the ranges of "influences."

IV

Meditation after further reading during which I found nothing of interest:

1

Beauty is a brief gasp between one cliché and another. In this case, between the "fourteeners" and the rhymed couplet of "pentameter."

2

"C. M." was a poet, likewise Golding, both facts already known to all "students of the period." Turbeyville or Turbeuile is not a discovery.

. . .

Horace would seem to confer no boons upon his translators. With the exception of Chapman, the early translators of Homer seem less happy than the translators of

Ovid. Horace's Satires are, we believe, the basis of much eighteenth century satire. The earliest English version of any Horace that I have found is headed:

"A Medicinable Morall, that is 2 Bookes of Horace his Satyres, Englyshed according to the prescription of saint Hierome (Episto. ad Ruffin.) Quod malum est, muta, Quod bonum est, prode. The Wailyngs of the Prophet Hieremiah done into Englyshe verse also Epigrammes, by T. Drant. Perused and allowed according to the Queen Madiesties Iniunctions, London 1566."

The mutation of the satires is not inviting. The Ars Poetica opens as follows:

> A Paynter if he shoulde adioyne
> unto a womans heade
> A long maires necke and overspread
> the corpse in everye steade
> With sondry feathers of straunge huie,
> the whole proportioned so
> Without all good congruitye
> the nether parts do goe
> Into a fishe, on hye a freshe
> Welfavord womans face:
> My frinds let in to see this sighte
> could you not laugh a pace?

By 1625 the Miltonic cliché is already formed. It is perhaps not particularly Milton's. Sir T. Hawkins is greeted by John Beaumont, but I do not find his translations very readable. I turn back, indeed, gratefully to Corinna (Amores I. 5.) in a long loose gown

> Her white neck hid with trells hanging downe
> Resembling fair Semiramis going to bed
> Or Layis of a thousand lovers spread.

"C. M." gets quality even in the hackneyed topic:

What age of Varroes name shall not be told,
And Iasons Argos, and the fleece of golde,
Lofty Lucresius shall live that houre
That Nature shall dissolve this earthly bowre.
Eneas warre, and Titerius shall be read
While Rome of all the conquering world is head.
Till Cupid's bow and fierie shafts be broken,
Thy verses, sweete Tibullus, shal be spoken.

As late as 1633 Saltonstall keeps some trace of good cadence, though it is manifestly departing.

Now Zephyrus warmes the ayre, the yeare is runne
And the long seeming winter now is done,
The Ramme which bore faire Hellen once away,
Hath made the darke night equall to the day.
Now boyes and girles do sweet Violets get,
Which in the country often grow unset,
Faire coloured flowers in the Meddowes spring,
And now the Birds their untaught notes do sing.
(Tristia XII.)

Turberuile in the 1567 edition of the Heroides does not confine himself to one measure, nor to rhyme. I think I have seen a mis-statement about the date of the earliest blank verse in English. These eight lines should prevent its being set too late. The movement is, to me at least, of interest, apart from any question of scholastic preciosity.

Aemonian Laodamia sendeth health,
And greeting to Protesilaus hir spouse:
And wisheth it, where he soiourns, to stay.

Report hath spread in Aulide that you lie
In rode, by meane of fierce and froward gale.
Ah when thou me forsookste, where was the winde,
Then broiling seas thine Oares should have withstood,
That was a fitting time for wrathful waves.

His Phaedra has the "fourteener" measure.

"My pleasure is to haughtie hills
and bushie brakes to hie:
To pitch my hay, or with my Houndes
to rayse a lustie crie."

But there is an infinite monotony of fourteeners, and then there is an infinite plethora of rhymed ten syllable couplets. And they are all "exactly alike." Whether they translate Horace or Homer they are all exactly alike. Beauty is a gasp between clichés.

For every "great age" a few poets have written a few beautiful lines, or found a few exquisite melodies, and ten thousand people have copied them, until each strand of music is planed down to a dulness. The Sapphic stanza appears an exception, and yet, ... Greece and Alexandria may have been embedded knee-deep in bad Sapphics, and it is easy to turn it to ridicule, comical, thumping.

V

There is a certain resonance in "Certain Bokes of Virgiles Aenaeis by Henry Earl of Surrey" (apud Ricardum Tottel 1557).

They whisted all, with fixed face attent
When prince Aeneas from the royal seat
Thus gan to speak, O Queene, it is thy will,
I should renew a woe can not be told:
How that the Grekes did spoile and overthrow
The Phrygian wealth, and wailful realm of Troy,
Those ruthful things that I myself beheld,
And whereof no small part fel to my share,
Which to expresse, who could refraine from teres,
What Myrmidon, or yet what Dolopes?
What stern Ulysses waged soldiar?

And loe moist night now from the welkin falles
And sterres declining counsel us to rest.

Still there is hardly enough here to persuade one to reread or to read The Aeneid. Besides it is "so Miltonic." Tho. Phaer, Docteur of Phisike in 1562, published a version in older mould, whereof this tenebrous sample:

Even in ye porche, and first in Limbo iawes done wailings dwell
And Cares on couches lyen, and Settled Mindes on vengeans fell
Diseases leane and pale and combrous Age of dompishe yeres
As Scillas and Centaurus, man before and beast behind
In every doore they stampe, and Lyons sad with gnashing sound
And Bugges with hundryd heades as Briary, and armid round
Chimera fightes with flames and gastly Gorgon grim to see,
Eneas sodenly for feare his glistering sword out toke.

He uses inner rhyme, and alliteration apparently without any design, merely because they happen. Such lines as "For as at sterne I stood, and steering strongly held my helme" do not compare favorably with the relatively free Saxon fragments. But when we come to "The XIII BUKES of ENEADOS of the famose Poete Virgill, translatet out of Latyne verses into Scottish metir by the Reverend Father in God Mayster Gawin Douglas Bishop of Dunkel, unkil to the Erle of Angus, every book having hys particular prologe (printed in 1553 [1])" we have to deal with a highly different matter.

> The battellis and the man I will discrive
> Fra Troyis boundis, first that fugitive
> By fate to Italie, came coist lauyne
> Ouer land and se, cachit with meikill pyne
> By force of goddis above, fra every stede
> Of cruel Juno, throw auld remembrit feid
> Grete payne in battelles, sufferit he also
> Or he his goddis, brocht in latio
> And belt the ciete, fra quham of nobil fame
> The latyne peopil, taken has thare name
>
> . . . .

His commas are not punctuation, but indicate his caesurae. Approaching the passage concerning the "hundryd headed Bugges" of Dr. Phaer, Douglas translates as follows:

> Fra thine strekis the way profound anone
> Depe unto hellis flude, of Acherone

[1] Written about 1512, i.e. early in the reign of Henry VIII, and by no means "Elizabethan."

With holebisme, and hidduous swelth unrude
Drumly of mude, and skaldand as it war wode.

. . . . .

Thir riueris and thir watteris kepit war
Be ane Charone, ane grisly ferrear
Terribyl of schape, and sluggard of array
Apoun his chin feill, Chanos haris gray.

I am inclined to think that he gets more poetry out of Virgil than any other translator. At least he gives one a clue to Dante's respect for the Mantuan. In the first book Aeneas with the "traist Achates" is walking by the sea-bord:

Amid the wod, his mother met them tuay
Semand and made, in vissage and array
With wappinnis, like the Virginis of spartha
Or the stowt wensche, of trace Harpalita
Haistand the hors, her fadder to reskewe
Spediar than hebroun, the swift flude did persew.
For Venus efter the gys, and maner thare
Ane active bow, apoun her schulder bare
As sche had bene, ane wilde huntreis
With wind waffing, hir haris lowsit of trace.

This is not spoiled by one's memory of Chaucer's allusion.

"Goyng in a queynt array
"As she hadde ben an hunteresse,
"With wynd blowynge upon hir tresse;

Douglas continues:

Hir skirt kiltit, till her bare knee
And first of other, unto them, thus speike sche.

From Aeneas answer, these lines:

> Quhidder thou be diane, phebus sister brycht
> Or than sum goddis, of thyr Nymphyis kynd
> Maistres of woddis beis to, us happy and kynd
> Relief our lang travell, quhat ever thow be.

And after her prophecy:

Vera incessu patuit dea.

> Thus sayd sche, and turned incontinent
> Hir nek schane, like unto the Rose in may
> Hir heuinly haris, glitterand bricht and gay
> Kest from her forehead, ane smell glorious and sueit
> Hir habit fell doune, covering to her feit
> And in hir passage, ane verray god did her kyith
> And fra that he knew, his moder allwith.
>
> . . . .
>
> But Venus with ane sop, of myst baith tway
> And with ane dirk cloud closit round about
> That na man sul tham se . . . . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> Hir self op lyft, to paphum past swyth
> To vesy her resting place, joly and blyth
> There is hir tempill, in Cipirland
> Quharin thare dois ane hundreth altaris stand
> Hait burning full of saba, sence all houris
> Ane smelland swete, with fresch garland and flouris.
>
> . . . .

Gawine Douglas was a great poet, and Golding has never had due praise since his own contemporaries be-

stowed it upon him. Caxton's Virgil (1490) is a prose reduction of a French version. The eclogue beginning

> "Tityrus, happilie thou lyste, tumbling under a beech tree"

is too familiar to quote here.

The celebrated distych:

> All trauellers doo gladlie report great praise of Vlysses
> For that he knewe manie mens manners, and saw many citties

is quoted by Wm. Webbe in 1586, as a perfect example of English quantity, and ascribed to "Master Watson, fellow of S. John's," forty years earlier. If Master Watson continued his Odyssey there is alas no further trace of it.

. . . .

Conclusions after this reading:

1. The quality of translations declined in measure as the translators ceased to be absorbed in the subject matter of their original. They ended in the "Miltonian" cliché; in the stock and stilted phraseology of the usual English verse as it has come down to us.

2. This "Miltonian" cliché is much less Milton's invention than is usually supposed.

3. His visualization is probably better than I had thought. The credit due him for developing the resonance of the English blank verse paragraph is probably much less than most other people have until now supposed.

4. Gawine Douglas his works, should be made accessible by reprinting.

5. This will probably be done by some dull dog, who will thereby receive cash and great scholastic distinction. I however shall die in the gutter because I have not observed that commandment which says "Thou shalt respect the imbecilities of thine elders in order that thy belly shall be made fat from the jobs which lie in their charge."

6. That editors, publishers, and universities loathe the inquisitive spirit.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

THE SERIOUS ARTIST[1]

1

It is curious that one should be asked to rewrite Sidney's "Defence of Poesy" in the year of grace 1913. During the intervening centuries, and before them, other centres of civilisation had decided that good art was a blessing and that bad art was criminal, and they had spent some time and thought in trying to find means whereby to distinguish the true art from the sham. But in England now, in the age of Gosse as in the age of Gossen we are asked if the arts are moral. We are asked to define the relation of the arts to economics, we are asked what position the arts are to hold in the ideal republic. And it is obviously the opinion of many people less objectionable than the Sydney Webbs that the arts had better not exist at all.

I take no great pleasure in writing prose about æsthetic. I think one work of art is worth forty prefaces and as many apologiæ. Nevertheless I have been questioned earnestly and by a person certainly of good will. It is as if one said to me: what is the use of open spaces in this city, what is the use of rose-trees and why do you wish to plant trees and lay out parks and gardens? There are some who do not take delight in these things.

[1] From "The Egoist," a. d. 1913.

The rose springs fairest from some buried Cæsar's throat and the dogwood with its flower of four petals (our dogwood, not the tree you call by that name) is grown from the heart of Aucassin, or perhaps this is only fancy. Let us pursue the matter in ethic.

It is obvious that ethics are based on the nature of man, just as it is obvious that civics are based upon the nature of men when living together in groups.

It is obvious that the good of the greatest number cannot be attained until we know in some sort of what that good must consist. In other words we must know what sort of an animal man is, before we can contrive his maximum happiness, or before we can decide what percentage of that happiness he can have without causing too great a percentage of unhappiness to those about him.

The arts, literature, poesy, are a science, just as chemistry is a science. Their subject is man, mankind and the individual. The subject of chemistry is matter considered as to its composition.

The arts give us a great percentage of the lasting and unassailable data regarding the nature of man, of immaterial man, of man considered as a thinking and sentient creature. They begin where the science of medicine leaves off or rather they overlap that science. The borders of the two arts overcross.

From medicine we learn that man thrives best when duly washed, aired and sunned. From the arts we learn that man is whimsical, that one man differs from another. That men differ among themselves as leaves upon trees differ. That they do not resemble each other as do buttons cut by machine.

From the arts also we learn in what ways man resembles and in what way he differs from certain other

animals. We learn that certain men are often more akin to certain especial animals than they are to other men of different composition. We learn that all men do not desire the same things and that it would therefore be inequitable to give to all men two acres and a cow.

It would be manifestly inequitable to treat the ostrich and the polar bear in the same fashion, granted that it is not unjust to have them pent up where you can treat them at all.

An ethic based on a belief that men are different from what they are is manifestly stupid. It is stupid to apply such an ethic as it is to apply laws and morals designed for a nomadic tribe, or for a tribe in the state of barbarism, to a people crowded into the slums of a modern metropolis. Thus in the tribe it is well to beget children, for the more strong male children you have in the tribe the less likely you are to be bashed on the head by males of the neighbouring tribes, and the more female children the more rapidly the tribe will increase. Conversely it is a crime rather worse than murder to beget children in a slum, to beget children for whom no fitting provision is made, either as touching their physical or economic wellbeing. The increase not only afflicts the child born but the increasing number of the poor keeps down the wage. On this count the bishop of London, as an encourager of this sort of increase, is a criminal of a type rather lower and rather more detestable than the souteneur.

I cite this as one example of inequity persisting because of a continued refusal to consider a code devised for one state of society, in its (the code's) relation to a different state of society. It is as if, in physics or engineering, we refused to consider a force designed to affect one mass, in its relation (i.e. the force's) to an-

other mass wholly differing, or in some notable way differing, from the first mass.

As inequities can exist because of refusals to consider the actualities of a law in relation to a social condition, so can inequities exist through refusal to consider the actualities of the composition of the masses, or of the individuals to which they are applied.

If all men desired above everything else two acres and a cow, obviously the perfect state would be that state which gave to each man two acres and a cow.

If any science save the arts were able more precisely to determine what the individual does actually desire, then that science would be of more use in providing the data for ethics.

In like manner, if any sciences save medicine and chemistry were more able to determine what things were compatible with physical wellbeing, then those sciences would be of more value for providing the data of hygiene.

This brings us to the immorality of bad art. Bad art is inaccurate art. It is art that makes false reports. If a scientist falsifies a report either deliberately or through negligence we consider him as either a criminal or a bad scientist according to the enormity of his offence, and he is punished or despised accordingly.

If he falsifies the reports of a maternity hospital in order to retain his position and get profit and advancement from the city board, he may escape detection. If he declines to make such falsification he may lose financial rewards, and in either case his baseness or his pluck may pass unknown and unnoticed save by a very few people. Nevertheless one does not have to argue his case. The layman knows soon enough on hearing it whether the physician is to be blamed or praised.

If an artist falsifies his report as to the nature of man, as to his own nature, as to the nature of his ideal of the perfect, as to the nature of his ideal of this, that or the other, of god, if god exist, of the life force, of the nature of good and evil, if good and evil exist, of the force with which he believes or disbelieves this, that or the other, of the degree in which he suffers or is made glad; if the artist falsifies his reports on these matters or on any other matter in order that he may conform to the taste of his time, to the proprieties of a sovereign, to the conveniences of a preconceived code of ethics, then that artist lies. If he lies out of deliberate will to lie, if he lies out of carelessness, out of laziness, out of cowardice, out of any sort of negligence whatsoever, he nevertheless lies and he should be punished or despised in proportion to the seriousness of his offence. His offence is of the same nature as the physician's and according to his position and the nature of his lie he is responsible for future oppressions and for future misconceptions. Albeit his lies are known to only a few, or his truth-telling to only a few. Albeit he may pass without censure for one and without praise for the other. Albeit he can only be punished on the plane of his crime and by nothing save the contempt of those who know of his crime. Perhaps it is caddishness rather than crime. However there is perhaps nothing worse for a man than to know that he is a cur and to know that someone else, if only one person, knows it.

We distinguish very clearly between the physician who is doing his best for a patient, who is using drugs in which he believes, or who is in a wilderness, let us say, where the patient can get no other medical aid. We distinguish, I say, very clearly between the failure of such a physician, and the act of that physician, who

ignorant of the patient's disease, being in reach of more skilful physicians, deliberately denies an ignorance of which he is quite conscious, refuses to consult other physicians, tries to prevent the patient's having access to more skilful physicians, or deliberately tortures the patient for his own ends.

One does not need to read black print to learn this ethical fact about physicians. Yet it takes a deal of talking to convince a layman that bad art is "immoral." And that good art however "immoral" it is, is wholly a thing of virtue. Purely and simply that good art can NOT be immoral. By good art I mean art that bears true witness, I mean the art that is most precise. You can be wholly precise in representing a vagueness. You can be wholly a liar in pretending that the particular vagueness was precise in its outline. If you cannot understand this with regard to poetry, consider the matter in terms of painting.

If you have forgotten my statement that the arts bear witness and define for us the inner nature and conditions of man, consider the Victory of Samothrace and the Taj of Agra. The man who carved the one and the man who designed the other may either or both of them have looked like an ape, or like two apes respectively. They may have looked like other apelike or swinelike men. We have the Victory and the Taj to witness that there was something within them differing from the contents of apes and of the other swinelike men. Thus we learn that humanity is a species or genus of animals capable of a variation that will produce the desire for a Taj or a Victory, and moreover capable of effecting that Taj or Victory in stone. We know from other testimony of the arts and from ourselves that the desire often overshoots the power of efficient presenta-

tion; we therefore conclude that other members of the race may have desired to effect a Taj or a Victory. We even suppose that men have desired to effect more beautiful things although few of us are capable of forming any precise mental image of things, in their particular way, more beautiful than this statue or this building. So difficult is this that no one has yet been able to effect a restoration for the missing head of the Victory. At least no one has done so in stone, so far as I know. Doubtless many people have stood opposite the statue and made such heads in their imagination.

As there are in medicine the art of diagnosis and the art of cure, so in the arts, so in the particular arts of poetry and of literature, there is the art of diagnosis and there is the art of cure. They call one the cult of ugliness and the other the cult of beauty.

The cult of beauty is the hygiene, it is sun, air and the sea and the rain and the lake bathing. The cult of ugliness, Villon, Baudelaire, Corbière, Beardsley are diagnosis. Flaubert is diagnosis. Satire, if we are to ride this metaphor to staggers, satire is surgery, insertions and amputations.

Beauty in art reminds one what is worth while. I am not now speaking of shams. I mean beauty, not slither, not sentimentalising about beauty, not telling people that beauty is the proper and respectable thing. I mean beauty. You don't argue about an April wind, you feel bucked up when you meet it. You feel bucked up when you come on a swift moving thought in Plato or on a fine line in a statue.

Even this pother about gods reminds one that something is worth while. Satire reminds one that certain things are not worth while. It draws one to consider time wasted.

The cult of beauty and the delineation of ugliness are not in mutual opposition.

2

I have said that the arts give us our best data for determining what sort of creature man is. As our treatment of man must be determined by our knowledge or conception of what man is, the arts provide data for ethics.

These data are sound and the data of generalising psychologists and social theoricians are usually unsound, for the serious artist is scientific and the theorist is usually empiric in the mediæval fashion. That is to say a good biologist will make a reasonable number of observations of any given phenomenon before he draws a conclusion, thus we read such phrases as "over 1100 cultures from the secretions of the respiratory tracts of over 500 patients and 30 nurses and attendants." The results of each observation must be precise and no single observation must in itself be taken as determining a general law, although, after experiment, certain observations may be held as typical or normal. The serious artist is scientific in that he presents the image of his desire, of his hate, of his indifference as precisely that, as precisely the image of his own desire, hate or indifference. The more precise his record the more lasting and unassailable his work of art.

The theorist, and we see this constantly illustrated by the English writers on sex, the theorist constantly proceeds as if his own case, his own limits and predilections were the typical case, or even as if it were the universal. He is constantly urging someone else to behave as he, the theorist, would like to behave. Now art never asks anybody to do anything, or to think any-

thing, or to be anything. It exists as the trees exist, you can admire, you can sit in the shade, you can pick bananas, you can cut firewood, you can do as you jolly well please.

Also you are a fool to seek the kind of art you don't like. You are a fool to read classics because you are told to and not because you like them. You are a fool to aspire to good taste if you haven't naturally got it. If there is one place where it is idiotic to sham that place is before a work of art. Also you are a fool not to have an open mind, not to be eager to enjoy something you might enjoy but don't know how to. But it is not the artist's place to ask you to learn, or to defend his particular works of art, or to insist on your reading his books. Any artist who wants your particular admiration is, by just so much, the less artist.

The desire to stand on the stage, the desire of plaudits has nothing to do with serious art. The serious artist may like to stand on the stage, he may, apart from his art, be any kind of imbecile you like, but the two things are not connected, at least they are not concentric. Lots of people who don't even pretend to be artists have the same desire to be slobbered over, by people with less brains than they have.

The serious artist is usually, or is often as far from the ægrum vulgus as is the serious scientist. Nobody has heard of the abstract mathematicians who worked out the determinants that Marconi made use of in his computations for the wireless telegraph. The public, the public so dear to the journalistic heart, is far more concerned with the shareholders in the Marconi company.

The permanent property, the property given to the race at large is precisely these data of the serious sci-

entist and of the serious artist; of the scientist as touching the relations of abstract numbers, of molecular energy, of the composition of matter, etc.; of the serious artist, as touching the nature of man, of individuals.

Men have ceased trying to conquer the world,[1] and to acquire universal knowledge. Men still try to promote the ideal state. No perfect state will be founded on the theory, or on the working hypothesis that all men are alike. No science save the arts will give us the requisite data for learning in what ways men differ.

The very fact that many men hate the arts is of value, for we are enabled by finding out what part of the arts they hate, to learn something of their nature. Usually when men say they hate the arts we find that they merely detest quackery and bad artists.

In the case of a man's hating one art and not the others we may learn that he is of defective hearing or of defective intelligence. Thus an intelligent man may hate music or a good musician may detest very excellent authors.

And all these things are very obvious.

Among thinking and sentient people the bad artist is contemned as we would contemn a negligent physician or a sloppy, inaccurate scientist, and the serious artist is left in peace, or even supported and encouraged. In the fog and the outer darkness no measures are taken to distinguish between the serious and the unserious artist. The unserious artist being the commoner brand and greatly outnumbering the serious variety, and it being to the temporary and apparent advantage of the false artist to gain the rewards proper to the serious artist, it is natural that the unserious

[1] Blind optimism, a. d. 1913.

artist should do all in his power to obfuscate the lines of demarcation.

Whenever one attempts to demonstrate the difference between serious and unserious work, one is told that "it is merely a technical discussion." It has rested at that—in England it has rested at that for more than three hundred years. The people would rather have patent medicines than scientific treatment. They will occasionally be told that art as art is not a violation of God's most holy laws. They will not have a specialist's opinion as to what art is good. They will not consider the "problem of style." They want "The value of art to life" and "Fundamental issues."

As touching fundamental issues: The arts give us our data of psychology, of man as to his interiors, as to the ratio of his thought to his emotions, etc., etc., etc.

The touchstone of an art is its precision. This precision is of various and complicated sorts and only the specialist can determine whether certain works of art possess certain sorts of precision. I don't mean to say that any intelligent person cannot have more or less sound judgment as to whether a certain work of art is good or not. An intelligent person can usually tell whether or not a person is in good health. It is none the less true that it takes a skilful physician to make certain diagnoses or to discern the lurking disease beneath the appearance of vigour.

It is no more possible to give in a few pages full instructions for knowing a masterpiece than it would be to give full instructions for all medical diagnosis.

3

EMOTION AND POESY

Obviously, it is not easy to be a great poet. If it were, many more people would have done so. At no period in history has the world been free of people who have mildly desired to be great poets and not a few have endeavoured conscientiously to be such.

I am aware that adjectives of magnitude are held to savour of barbarism. Still there is no shame in desiring to give great gifts and an enlightened criticism does not draw ignominious comparisons betweeen Villon and Dante. The so-called major poets have most of them given their *own* gift, but the peculiar term "major" is rather a gift to them from Chronos. I mean that they have been born upon the stroke of their hour and that it has been given them to heap together and arrange and harmonize the results of many men's labour. This very faculty for amalgamation is a part of their genius and it is, in a way, a sort of modesty, a sort of unselfishness. They have not wished for property.

The men from whom Dante borrowed are remembered as much for the fact that he did borrow as for their own compositions. At the same time he gave of his own, and no mere compiler and classifier of other men's discoveries is given the name of "major poet" for more than a season.

If Dante had not done a deal more than borrow rhymes from Arnaut Daniel and theology from Aquinas he would not be published by Dent in the year of grace 1913.

We might come to believe that the thing that matters in art is a sort of energy, something more or less

like electricity or radio-activity, a force transfusing, welding, and unifying. A force rather like water when it spurts up through very bright sand and sets it in swift motion. You may make what image you like.

I do not know that there is much use in composing an answer to the often asked question: What is the difference between poetry and prose?

I believe that poetry is the more highly energized. But these things are relative. Just as we say that a certain temperature is hot and another cold. In the same way we say that a certain prose passage "is poetry" meaning to praise it, and that a certain passage of verse is "only prose" meaning dispraise. And at the same time "Poetry!!!" is used as a synonym for "Bosh! Rott!! Rubbish!!!" The thing that counts is "Good Writing."

And "Good writing" is perfect control. And it is quite easy to control a thing that has in it no energy—provided that it be not too heavy and that you do not wish to make it move.

And, as all the words that one would use in writing about these things are the vague words of daily speech, it is nearly impossible to write with scientific preciseness about "prose and verse" unless one writes a complete treatise on the "art of writing," defining each word as one would define the terms in a treatise on chemistry. And on this account all essays about "poetry" are usually not only dull but inaccurate and wholly useless. And on like account if you ask a good painter to tell you what he is trying to do to a canvas he will very probably wave his hands helplessly and murmur that "He——eh—eh—he can't talk about it." And that if you "see anything at all, he is quite—eh—more or less—eh—satisfied."

Nevertheless it has been held for a shameful thing that a man should not be able to give a reason for his acts and words. And if one does not care about being taken for a mystificateur one may as well try to give approximate answers to questions asked in good faith. It might be better to do the thing thoroughly in a properly accurate treatise, but one has not always two or three spare years at one's disposal, and one is dealing with very subtle and complicated matter, and even so, the very algebra of logic is itself open to debate.

Roughly then, Good writing is writing that is perfectly controlled, the writer says just what he means. He says it with complete clarity and simplicity. He uses the smallest possible number of words. I do not mean that he skimps paper, or that he screws about like Tacitus to get his thought crowded into the least possible space. But, granting that two sentences are at times easier to understand than one sentence containing the double meaning, the author tries to communicate with the reader with the greatest possible despatch, save where for any one of forty reasons he does not wish to do so.

Also there are various kinds of clarity. There is the clarity of the request: Send me four pounds of ten-penny nails. And there is the syntactical simplicity of the request: Buy me the kind of Rembrandt I like. This last is an utter cryptogram. It presupposes a more complex and intimate understanding of the speaker than most of us ever acquire of anyone. It has as many meanings, almost, as there are persons who might speak it. To a stranger it conveys nothing at all.

It is the almost constant labour of the prose artist to translate this latter kind of clarity into the former; to say "Send me the kind of Rembrandt I like" in the

terms of "Send me four pounds of ten-penny nails."

The whole thing is an evolution. In the beginning simple words were enough: Food; water; fire. Both prose and poetry are but an extension of language. Man desires to communicate with his fellows. He desires an ever increasingly complicated communication. Gesture serves up to a point. Symbols may serve. When you desire something not present to the eye or when you desire to communicate ideas, you must have recourse to speech. Gradually you wish to communicate something less bare and ambiguous than ideas. You wish to communicate an idea and its modifications, an idea and a crowd of its effects, atmospheres, contradictions. You wish to question whether a certain formula works in every case, or in what per cent. of cases, etc., etc., etc., you get the Henry James novel.

You wish to communicate an idea and its concomitant emotions, or an emotion and its concomitant ideas, or a sensation and its derivative emotions, or an impression that is emotive, etc., etc., etc. You begin with the yeowl and the bark, and you develop into the dance and into music, and into music with words, and finally into words with music, and finally into words with a vague adumbration of music, words suggestive of music, words measured, or words in a rhythm that preserves some accurate trait of the emotive impression, or of the sheer character of the fostering or parental emotion.

When this rhythm, or when the vowel and consonantal melody or sequence seems truly to bear the trace of emotion which the poem (for we have come at last to the poem) is intended to communicate, we say that this part of the work is good. And "this part of the work" is by now "technique." That "dry, dull, pedantic" tech-

nique, that all bad artists rail against. It is only a part of technique, it is rhythm, cadence, and the arrangement of sounds.

Also the "prose," the words and their sense must be such as fit the emotion. Or, from the other side, ideas, or fragments of ideas, the emotion and concomitant emotions of this "Intellectual and Emotional Complex" (for we have come to the intellectual and emotional complex) must be in harmony, they must form an organism, they must be an oak sprung from one acorn.

When you have words of a lament set to the rhythm and tempo of "There'll be a Hot Time in the Old Town to-night" you have either an intentional burlesque or you have rotten art. Shelley's "Sensitive Plant" is one of the rottenest poems ever written, at least one of the worst ascribable to a recognized author. It jiggles to the same tune as "A little peach in the orchard grew." Yet Shelley recovered and wrote the fifth act of the Cenci.

4

It is occasionally suggested by the wise that poets should acquire the graces of prose. That is an extension of what has been said above anent control. Prose does not need emotion. It may, but it need not, attempt to portray emotion.

Poetry is a centaur. The thinking word-arranging, clarifying faculty must move and leap with the energizing, sentient, musical faculties. It is precisely the difficulty of this amphibious existence that keeps down the census record of good poets. The accomplished prose author will tell you that he "can only write poetry when he has a belly-ache" and thence he will argue that poetry just isn't an art.

I dare say there are very good marksmen who just can't shoot from a horse.

Likewise if a good marksman only mounted a few times he might never acquire any proficiency in shooting from the saddle. Or leaving metaphor, I suppose that what, in the long run, makes the poet is a sort of persistence of the emotional nature, and, joined with this, a peculiar sort of control.

The saying that "a lyric poet might as well die at thirty" is simply saying that the emotional nature seldom survives this age, or that it becomes, at any rate, subjected and incapable of moving the whole man. Of course this is a generality, and, as such, inaccurate.

It is true that most people poetize more or less, between the ages of seventeen and twenty-three. The emotions are new, and, to their possessor, interesting, and there is not much mind or personality to be moved. As the man, as his mind, becomes a heavier and heavier machine, a constantly more complicated structure, it requires a constantly greater voltage of emotional energy to set it in harmonious motion. It is certain that the emotions increase in vigour as a vigorous man matures. In the case of Guido we have his strongest work at fifty. Most important poetry has been written by men over thirty.

"En l'an trentiesme de mon eage," begins Villon and considering the nature of his life thirty would have seen him more spent than forty years of more orderly living.

Aristotle will tell you that "The apt use of metaphor, being as it is, the swift perception of relations, is the true hall-mark of genius." That abundance, that readiness of the figure is indeed one of the surest proofs that the mind is upborne upon the emotional surge.

By "apt use," I should say it were well to under-

stand, a swiftness, almost a violence, and certainly a vividness. This does not mean elaboration and complication.

There is another poignancy which I do not care to analyze into component parts, if, indeed, such vivisection is possible. It is not the formal phrasing of Flaubert much as such formality is desirable and noble. It is such phrasing as we find in

> "Era già l'ora che volge il disio
> Ai naviganti" . . .

Or the opening of the ballata which begins:

> "Perch 'io non spero di tornar già mai
> Ballatetta, in Toscana."

Or:

> "S'ils n'ayment fors que pour l'argent,
> On ne les ayme que pour l'heure."

Or, in its context:

> "The fire that stirs about her, when she stirs,"

or, in its so different setting,

> "Ne maeg werigmod wyrde widhstondan
> ne se hreo hyge helpe gefremman:
> for dhon domgeorne dreorigne oft
> in hyra breostcofan bindath faeste."

These things have in them that passionate simplicity which is beyond the precisions of the intellect.

Truly they are perfect as fine prose is perfect, but they are in some way different from the clear statements of the observer. They are in some way different from that so masterly ending of the Herodias: "Comme elle était très lourde ils la portaient alternativement," or from the constatation in St. Julian Hospitalier: "Et l'idée lui vient d'employer son existence au service des autres."

The prose author has shown the triumph of his intellect and one knows that such triumph is not without its sufferings by the way, but by the verses one is brought upon the passionate moment. This moment has brought with it nothing that violates the prose simplicities. The intellect has not found it but the intellect has been moved.

There is little but folly in seeking the lines of division, yet if the two arts must be divided we may as well use that line as any other. In the verse something has come upon the intelligence. In the prose the intelligence has found a subject for its observations. The poetic fact pre-exists.

In a different way, of course, the subject of the prose pre-exists. Perhaps the difference is undemonstrable, perhaps it is not even communicable to any save those of good will. Yet I think this orderliness in the greatest poetic passages, this quiet statement that partakes of the nature of prose and is yet afloat and tossed in the emotional surges, is perhaps as true a test as that mentioned by the Greek theorician.

5

La poésie, avec ses comparaisons obligées, sa mythologie que ne croit pas le poète, sa dignité de style à la Louis XIV., et tout l'attirail de ses ornements appelés poétiques, est bien au-dessous de la prose dès

> qu'il s'agit de donner une idée claire et précise des mouvements du coeur; or, dans ce genre, on n'émeut que par la clarté.''—*Stendhal.*

And that is precisely why one employs oneself in seeking precisely the poetry that shall be without this flummery, this fustian *à la Louis XIV., ''farcie de comme.''* The above critique of Stendhal's does not apply to the Poema del Cid, nor to the parting of Odysseus and Calypso. In the writers of the duo-cento and early tre-cento we find a precise psychology, embedded in a now almost unintelligible jargon, but there nevertheless. If we cannot get back to these things; if the serious artist cannot attain this precision in verse, then he must either take to prose or give up his claim to being a serious artist.

It is precisely because of this fustian that the Parnassiads and epics of the eighteenth century and most of the present-day works of most of our contemporary versifiers are pests and abominations.

As the most efficient way to say nothing is to keep quiet, and as technique consists precisely in doing the thing that one sets out to do, in the most efficient manner, no man who takes three pages to say nothing can expect to be seriously considered as a technician. To take three pages to say nothing is not style, in the serious sense of that word.

There are several kinds of honest work. There is the thing that will out. There is the conscientious formulation, a thing of infinitely greater labour, for the first is not labour at all, though the efficient doing of it may depend on a deal of labour foregoing.

There is the ''labour foregoing,'' the patient testing of media, the patient experiment which shall avail per-

haps the artist himself, but is as likely to avail some successor.

The first sort of work may be poetry.

The second sort, the conscientious formulation, is more than likely to be prose.

The third sort of work savours of the laboratory, it concerns the specialist, and the dilettante, if that word retains any trace of its finer and original sense. A dilettante proper is a person who takes delight in the art, not a person who tries to interpose his inferior productions between masterwork and the public.

I reject the term connoisseurship, for "connoisseurship" is so associated in our minds with a desire for acquisition. The person possessed of connoisseurship is so apt to want to buy the rare at one price and sell it at another. I do not believe that a person with this spirit has ever *seen* a work of art. Let me restore the foppish term dilettante, the synonym for folly, to its place near the word *diletto*.

The dilettante has no axe to grind for himself. If he be artist as well, he will be none the less eager to preserve the best precedent work. He will drag out "sources" that prove him less original than his public would have him.

As for Stendhal's stricture, if we can have a poetry that comes as close as prose, *pour donner une idée claire et précise*, let us have it, *"E di venire a ciò io studio quanto posso . . . che la mia vita per alquanti anni duri."* . . . And if we cannot attain to such a poetry, noi altri poeti, for God's sake let us shut up. Let us "Give up, go down," etcetera; let us acknowledge that our art, like the art of dancing in armour, is out of date and out of fashion. Or let us go to our ignominious ends knowing that we have strained at the cords, that

we have spent our strength in trying to pave the way for a new sort of poetic art—it is not a new sort but an old sort—but let us know that we have tried to make it more nearly possible for our successors to recapture this art. To write a poetry that can be carried as a communication between intelligent men.

To this end *io studio quanto posso*. I have tried to establish a clear demarcation. I have been challenged on my use of the phrase "great art" in an earlier article. It is about as useless to search for a definition of "great art" as it is to search for a scientific definition of life. One knows fairly well what one means. One means something more or less proportionate to one's experience. One means something quite different at different periods of one's life.

It is for some such reason that all criticism should be professedly personal criticism. In the end the critic can only say "I like it," or "I am moved," or something of that sort. When he has shown us himself we are able to understand him.

Thus, in painting, I mean something or other vaguely associated in my mind with work labelled Durer, and Rembrandt, and Velasquez, etc., and with the painters whom I scarcely know, possibly of T'ang and Sung—though I dare say I've got the wrong labels—and with some Egyptian designs that should probably be thought of as sculpture.

And in poetry I mean something or other associated in my mind with the names of a dozen or more writers.

On closer analysis I find that I mean something like "maximum efficiency of expression"; I mean that the writer has expressed something interesting in such a

way that one cannot re-say it more effectively. I also mean something associated with discovery. The artist must have discovered something—either of life itself or of the means of expression.

Great art must of necessity be a part of good art. I attempted to define good art in an earlier chapter. It must bear true witness. Obviously great art must be an exceptional thing. It cannot be the sort of thing anyone can do after a few hours' practice. It must be the result of some exceptional faculty, strength, or perception. It must almost be that strength of perception working with the connivance of fate, or chance, or whatever you choose to call it.

And who is to judge? The critic, the reviewer, however stupid or ignorant, must judge for himself. The only really vicious criticism is the academic criticism of those who make the grand abnegation, who refuse to say what they think, if they do think, and who quote accepted opinion; these men are the vermin, their treachery to the great work of the past is as great as that of the false artists to the present. If they do not care enough for the heritage to have a personal conviction, then they have no licence to write.

Every critic should give indication of the sources and limits of his knowledge. The criticism of English poetry by men who knew no language but English, or who knew little but English and school-classics, has been a marasmus.

When we know to what extent each sort of expression has been driven, in, say, half a dozen great literatures, we begin to be able to tell whether a given work has the excess of great art. We would not think of letting a man judge pictures if he knew only English pic-

tures, or music if he knew only English music—or only French or German music for that matter.

The stupid or provincial judgment of art bases itself on the belief that great art must be like the art that it has been reared to respect.

APPENDIX II

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER TO "THE DIAL"

THERE is no culture that is not at least bilingual. Yet in 1912 or 1913 we find an American editor who writes of Henri de Regnier and M. Remy de Gourmont as "these young men." The rest of his sentence is to say that their work is unknown to him. This lacuna in his mental decorations does not in the least chagrin him. He has no desire to add to his presumably superabundant knowledge.

His confrère was the "new editor" of another magazine recommended to me as a "progressive." Here are some of his words:

"We wish to make the fiction in this magazine come as near to truth *as circumstances permit* . . ."

Second example:

"The contributors make the magazine and the *magazine makes* the contributors."

Are we still to believe that literature will come through the magazines? Has any first-class work of any sort ever been done to the specifications of a machine for pleasing the populace?

Is America to produce real literature or to continue, as she is at the present moment, a *joke,* a byword in literature for the ridiculous?

Investigate the standards and the vitality of the standards of the "best editorial offices," and see what spirit you find there. Do they believe that art is, in any measure, discovery? Is there any care for good letters, or *even* enough care for good letters to make them in any way concerned in trying to find out what constitutes and what makes for, good letters?

They have called Henry James European. Yet a deal of his work is about American subjects. Is a man less a citizen because he cares enough for letters to leave a country where the practice of them is, or at least seems, well-nigh impossible, in order that he may bequeath a heritage of good letters, even to the nation which has borne him?

It is not that the younger generation has not tried to exist "at home." It is that after years of struggle, one by one, they come abroad, in search of good company and good conversation, or send their manuscripts abroad for recognition; that they find themselves in the pages even of the "stolid and pre-Victorian *Quarterly*" before "hustling and modern America" has arrived at tolerance for their modernity.

APPENDIX III

EZRA POUND FILES EXCEPTIONS

London, Eng., July 30, 1916.

Editor of Reedy's Mirror:

In the interests of accuracy:

1

I was not born in Utah, "it is immaterial," but still I am not to be confused with "Ezra, the Mormon," however charming and sympathetic or fictitious he may have been. I was born in Idaho, in Hailey, in "the residence now occupied by Mr. Plughoff" (unless he has moved). There is, so far as I know, no memorial tablet.

2

I am not the "head of the vorticist movement." I said quite clearly in my memoir of Gaudier-Brzeska that the vorticist movement implied no series of personal subordinations. The pleasure of the vorticist movement was to find oneself at last *inter pares.* Mr. Wyndham Lewis is a man of so marked a genius, of such swift and profound intuitions that it would be ridiculous to speak of anyone else as being his "head." I cannot picture either Brzeska or Etchells considering himself as anyone's elbow or shin-bone. As an active and informal association it might be said that Lewis supplied the volcanic force, Brzeska the animal energy, and perhaps that I had contributed a certain Confucian calm and

reserve. There would have been no movement without Lewis.

At any rate, if you are irrevocably wedded to the phrase, "head of the movement," you would be more correct in applying the title to Lewis than to anyone else.

3

Let us come to your remarks about Gaudier-Brzeska's sculpture in your issue for July 14:

A

You say it seems to you "a new language known only to the sculptor."

Has any new light ever come in the arts or in the sciences save through a new speech known, *at first,* only to the artist or the inventor?

There was a language known only to abstract mathematicians (I believe to the men who experimented in "determinants"). This language gradually became known to physicists, or to a physicist, and you have now the very popular wireless telegraph, which is still "incomprehensible" to a very great number of people.

The intelligent man will learn as much as he can rather than pretend to be more ignorant than he is.

B

You ask: "What is formless form?" And then you rush on to talk about *"mutually agreed upon symbols."* I have not talked about "formless form." But try to follow me for a moment.

A circle or a triangle has just as much form as the Albert Memorial. Its form is simpler, to be sure.

Some centuries ago John Heydon professed to derive æsthetic satisfaction from the perfection of simple geometrical forms. There is the fable of Giotto's circle. I do not base an argument on these records. I adduce them simply to persuade you that it is possible to distinguish between a simple form and a "formless form." The latter term is your own. I do not profess to understand it.

Now it is manifestly ridiculous to say that you cannot take pleasure in a form *merely because* it is not the form of a man, an animal or a bunch of asparagus.

Many forms, such as those of the stone zoological garden on the Albert Memorial, are incapable of delighting us by the mere fact that they portray easily recognizable flora and fauna.

The perspective of arches as one looks toward the Koran *niche* in the Mosque of Cordova gives one infinitely more pleasure than the idiotic representative slush which "ornaments" St. Paul's Cathedral. The so-called ornaments obviously *represent* certain "saints" (behold your "mutually agreed upon symbol." The damn things are "saints," models of virtue, sacred effigies of deceased Orientals). The *form* of this statuary suggests nothing so much as plates of decomposed ice cream on a warm day, or soiled clothes dumped out of a hamper.

The arches in Cordova have, however, no form save the form of very beautiful arches. They do not *represent* anything else. The combination or composition is interesting. It required more skill to arrange this series of arches than to make one beautiful arch. If I claim an architectural pleasure in seeing this series of arches no one will call me fanatic or even fantastic. Yet this pleasure is a pleasure in form, in unadulterated form.

Ultimately all sculpture is judged by its form. As music is judged by its sound.

If sculpture were judged by the closeness with which it copies pre-existing material objects, the plaster cast or mould of the object would be the apex of the achievement.

You do not demand that the musician copy natural sounds. You permit him to start with a simple melodic form and develop his fugue, his harmony, or whatever he chooses.

In the case of Gaudier's "Dancer," you find your "themes given you" with the utmost clarity and distinctness. You have the circle on the breast and the triangle on the face. These two forms become animate, move, interplay, an increasing suggestion of power and movement in their various positions, distortions, culminating in the great sweep of the shoulders, the back of the statue, the arm thrown over the head.

It seems to me foolish to talk of this as the "powerfully crude suggestions of the beginning of sculpture." If, however, it did not suggest even to you the adverb "powerfully," I should think it failed through being over-intellectual, over-civilized in its concept, lacking in the emotional energy of great art.

There is in this work nothing of the "Rodin impression of emergence" theory.

C

When you write, "Without interposition of symbol, without ornament," you are right. When you add "without proportion or form," you are in error.

Brzeska's statues have form. No material object can escape it. My contention is that they have very interesting and expressive forms. It is not necessary that

one should associate their form or forms with the forms of anything else. It is for the spectator to decide whether the forms of this sculpture are *in themselves* delightful. There is no need of referring the form of the statue to the form of something extraneous.

As to proportion: "The Boy with a Coney" has "scale." Perhaps I had better define that last term. Scale is a very skillful sort of proportion. We say that a statue or a painting has "scale" when its proportions are so finely arranged that it might be reproduced in various sizes without the destruction of its beauty. This process is not infinite. It is not necessary that every work of art should possess it.

Still, when a novelist says by way of praise that a six-line poem has the "form of a novel" or that it "is like a good novel" or "contains" a novel, he is making an interesting criticism of the poet's sense of proportion and balance and "form" (if one be permitted to use the word as it were metaphorically).

When a statue one foot high could be reproduced at forty times that size and still remain finely proportioned, this possibility is an interesting commentary on the sculptor's sense of "proportion."

D

So let us leave Hamlet's clouds which were so "like" something or other. The musician Eric Satie once wrote a prelude which he called "Prelude in the shape of a pear." It served as a designation.

E

As for understanding and "mutually agreed upon symbols" and the general "intelligibility," I open a

weekly abomination and find a reproduction of a piece of sculpture labeled, "Figure Representing Aspiration." It displays a plump, lolling female and an infant deficient in the spankable parts. One can go down to the "Tate" in peace time and see messy pictures by the late Mr. Watts called "Hope," "Love," etc. These works do not please me. I never see why "Hope" mightn't just as well be something else. And as for the figure "representing" Aspiration. Does it represent "Aspiration"? I never saw aspiration looking like that. But I have seen spaghetti piled on a plate and the *form* was decidedly similar. A great deal of "representational" sculpture is, *in form,* not unlike plates of spaghetti.

In conclusion, I would advise the patient to look carefully at the illustrations to the *"Gaudier-Brzeska."* I would then advise him to get the local art gallery to provide him with Wyndham Lewis' "Timon" portfolio. I would then ask him to go forth again into the world and see what he can see where before he saw little or nothing.

The great mass of mankind are ignorant of the shape of nearly everything that they see or handle.

The artisan knows the shape of some of his tools. You know the shape of your pen-handle, but hardly the shape of your typewriter. The store of forms in the average man's head is smaller than his meager verbal vocabulary.

Yours,

Ezra Pound.

APPENDIX IV

VORTOGRAPHS

The tool called the vortescope was invented late in 1916. Mr. Coburn had been long desiring to bring cubism or vorticism into photography. Only with the invention of a suitable instrument was this possible.

In vortography he accepts the fundamental principles of vorticism, and those of vorticist painting in so far as they are applicable to the work of the camera.

The principles of vorticism have been amply set forth by Wyndham Lewis, Ezra Pound and Gaudier-Brzeska. The immediate ancestry is given in two quotations in *Blast:* Pater's "All arts approach the conditions of music"; and Whistler's "We are interested in a painting because it is an arrangement of lines and colours." Cezanne began taking "impressions" of masses. The term "mass" or "form" has been more prominent than the term "line" in recent discussions.

The vorticist principle is that a painting is an expression by means of an arrangement of form and colour in the same way that a piece of music is an expression by means of an arrangement of sound. In painting the form has only two dimensions (though it may suggest or "represent" a third dimension). In sculpture one uses three dimensions.

Or to put it another way: Painting makes use of colour arranged on a surface; Sculpture of masses defined by planes.

In vortography colour is practically excluded. There can be suggestion of colours. There can be a variety in the colour of the paper on which the vortograph is printed. But the medium of the vortographer is practically limited to form (shapes on a surface) and to a light and shade; to the peculiar varieties in lightness and darkness which belong to the technique of the camera.

THE CAMERA IS FREED FROM REALITY

A natural object or objects may perhaps be retained realistically by the vortographer if he chooses, and the vortograph containing such an object or objects will not be injured if the object or objects contribute interest to the pattern, that is to say, if they form an integral and formal part of the whole.

The vortoscope is useless to a man who cannot recognise a beautiful arrangement of forms on a surface, when his vortoscope has brought them to focus. His selection may be *almost* as creative as a painter's composition. His photographic technique must be assumed. It does not form a part of this discussion, though it is extremely important, and all, or most, of the qualities of the black and white, of light and dark, will depend upon it. These things, however, can be discussed by any intelligent photographer, assuming that such persons exist. There is no need of any special foreword about this part of the technique.

Vorticism has reawakened our sense of form, a sense long dead in occidental artists. Any person or animal unable to take pleasure in an arrangement of forms as he or she takes pleasure in an arrangement of musical notes, is thereby the poorer. People are sometimes tone-deaf and colour-blind. Other people, perhaps more numerous, are form-blind. Some ears cannot recognise the correct pitch of a note, and some eyes get no pleasure from a beautiful or expressive arrangement of forms.

Until recently people enjoyed pictures chiefly, and often exclusively because the painting reminded them of something else. Numerous contemporaries have passed that state of development.

The modern will enjoy vortograph No. 3, not because it reminds him of a shell bursting on a hillside, but because the arrangement of forms pleases him, as a phrase of Chopin might please him. He will enjoy vortograph No. 8, not because it reminds him of a falling Zeppelin, but because he likes the shape and arrangement of its blocks of dark and light.

Obviously vortographs will lack certain interests that are to be found in vorticist paintings. They bear the same relation to vorticist painting that academic photography bears to academy painting. Almost any fool can paint an academy picture, and any imbecile can shoot off a Kodak.

Certain definite problems in the æsthetics of form may possibly be worked out with the vortescope. When these problems are solved vorticism will have entered that phase of morbidity into which representative paint-

ing descended after the Renaissance painters had decided upon all the correct proportions of the human body, etc., etc., etc. That date of decline is still afar off.

Vortography stands below the other vorticist arts in that it is an art of the eye, not of the eye and hand together. It stands above photography in that the vortographer combines his forms *at will*. He selects just what actually he wishes, he excludes the rest. He chooses what forms, lights, masses, he desires, he arranges them *at will* on his screen. He can make summer of London October. The aereën and submarine effects are got in his study. All these vortographs were done in two or three rooms. The dull bit of window-frame (vortograph No. 16) produces "a fine Picasso," or if not a "Picasso" a "Coburn." It is an excellent arrangement of shapes, and more interesting than most of the works of the bad imitators of Lewis.

Art photography has been stuck for twenty years. During that time practically no new effects have been achieved. Art photography is stale and suburban. It has never had any part in æsthetics. Vortography may have, however, very much the same place in the coming æsthetic that the anatomical studies of the Renaissance had in the æsthetics of the academic school. It is at least a subject which a serious man may consider. It is not for me to decide whether there can be a mathematical harmony of form, angles, proportions, etc., arranged as we have had a mathematical "harmony" arranged for us in music.

I am not concerned with deciding whether such a mathematical schedule is desirable or would be beneficent.

But if it is *possible,* then the vortescope could be extremely useful, and may play a very important part in the discovery of such a system.

Such a system would be of æsthetics and not merely of physics and optics. It would "depend" on the science of optics as much and as little as musical harmony depends on the physiology of the ear.

Impressionism sought its theoretic defence in, if it did not arise from, Berkeley's theory of the minimum visible, i.e., of the effect of points of light and colour on the retina.

Pleasure is derivable not only from the stroking or pushing of the retina by light waves of various colour, BUT ALSO by the impact of those waves in certain arranged tracts.

This simple and obvious fact is the basis of the "modern" "art" "revolution."

The eye *likes* certain plainnesses, certain complexities, certain arrangements, certain varieties, certain incitements, certain reliefs and suspensions.

It likes these things irrespective of whether or no they form a replica of known objects.

APPENDIX V

ARNOLD DOLMETSCH[1]

It was better to dig up the bas-reliefs of Assurbanipal's hunting than to have done an equal amount of Royal Academy sculpture. There are times when archæology is almost equal to creation, or when a resurrection is equally creative or even more creative than invention. Few contemporary composers have given more to to-day's music than has Arnold Dolmetsch.

His first realization was that music made for the old instruments could not be rendered on the piano. This proposition is exceedingly simple. You may play the notes of a violin solo on a piano or a banjo, but it will not be the same music. You may play the notes written for clavichord and harpsichord on the piano, or the pianola, but you will not make the same music. The first necessity, if one were to hear the old sounds, was a reconstruction of instruments, a multiplication of reconstructions; and this, as every educated person well knows, Arnold Dolmetsch has effected.

The next step was the removal of general misunderstandings of the old musical notation. This Mr. Dolmetsch has also triumphantly done in his "Interpretation of the Music of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries" (Novello, London, and H. W. Gray Co., New York). Not only this, but he has opened the way for a reconciliation between musicians and "the intelligent."

[1] Egoist. 1917.

This last act is extremely important; the reconstruction of old music is an activity which might end in itself. A possible re-fusion of intelligence with that other curious thing commonly known as "musical intelligence" contains many possibilities for the future; for the immediate future, the part of it chiefly concerning us and our mortal enjoyments.

All people have terms of abuse. Among artists and *literati* it is customary to excuse a man's stupidity by saying "He is a musician." Among musicians they say "Oh, that is a singer," implying depths of ignorance inconceivable to all but musicians.

Dolmetsch strikes at the root of the trouble by showing how music has been written, more and more, for the stupid; how the notators have gradually ceased to trust to, or to expect, intelligence on the part of interpreters; with the result that the whole major structure of music, of a piece of music, is obscured; the incidental elements, the detail show on the score equally with the cardinal contentions of the composer.

The neophyte is taught notes one by one, is taught scales. In the old way he would have been given the main structural points, he would have played the bare form of the piece, and gradually have filled in with the details.

There is more in Dolmetsch's "Section 14, on Divisions," than in a long course of practice and exercises; more I mean for the intelligent person to whom the mysteries of music have always seemed rather a jumble, a sort of pseudo-psychism practised by, and practicable for, people otherwise mentally inefficient.

I cannot demonstrate all this on a page. If Dolmetsch would write a shilling manual, simply dogma, leaving out his proofs and his explanations, and if

people would use it on children and on themselves, we might have an almost immediate improvement, for a big book travels slowly, and few have the patience to understand anything, though many will obey a command.

The technical points I can scarcely go into, but they are there in Dolmetsch's book for musicians, and for those who have unsatisfied curiosities about music.

The general reflections stirred by his writing I may, however, set down.

First: It seems to me that in music, as in the other arts (beginning in the eighteenth century, and growing a poison from which we are not yet free), greater rigidity in matters of minutiæ has forced a break-up of the large forms; has destroyed the sense of main form. Compare academic detail in one school of painting, and minute particularization about light and colour in another.

Any work of art is a compound of freedom and order. It is perfectly obvious that art hangs between chaos on one side and mechanics on the other. A pedantic insistence on detail tends to drive out "major form." A firm hold on major form makes for a freedom of detail. In painting men intent on minutiæ gradually lost the sense of form and form-combination. An attempt to restore this sense is branded as "revolution." It is revolution in the philological sense of the term.

The old way of music, teaching a man that a piece of music was a structure, certain main forms filled in with certain decorations, stimulated his intelligence, spurred on his constructive faculty. You might play the same lute-piece as many others, but you thought about playing it differently (i.e. with different notes), of playing it better. In a sense that is true of any per-

former, but the contemporary way of approach lays stress on having a memory like a phonograph; the reflex-centres are as highly thought of as is the main conception. Thematic invention has departed.

Naturally the best musicians escape the contagion. A few good artists in any period always do escape whatever contagion may be prevalent. In any age also, a few learned men must always support the poet against the music-teacher; the artist who creates against the machine for the vending of pictures; the inventive writer against the institutions of publishing and distribution. The modus is exceedingly simple. Some one must know that the fashion of the last forty years is not the eternal law of the art, whatever art it may be.

The heretic, the disturber, the genius, is the real person, the person stubborn in his intelligent instinct or protected by some trick of nature, some providential blindness, or deafness even, which prevents his being duped by a fashion; some stubbornness, some unsocial surliness which prevents him from pretending to be duped, from pretending to acquiesce.

When I, for emphasis, say above, "providential blindness or deafness," one must remember that in the case of the artist—if there be some such trick played on him by nature for the preservation of art, the blindness or deafness or whatever apparent protective insensitiveness there may be—there is always a compensating sensitiveness or hyper-sensitiveness, enforced it may be by some involuntary or half-voluntary concentration, which keeps him interested, absorbed in the art.

Nature and humanity will never in the long run be bilked by the music-teacher and the academician. They, nature and humanity, abhor an unreasoning setness; haste is also in their abomination. There also the artist

scores, for the "most brilliant," the most apparently sudden, great artist is always a plodder. He alone can afford to wait. The singer of late nineteenth-century ballads must get through with his job at once: ditto for the actor, for the successful society portraitist.

In nothing has invention been slower than in the notation of music; it took centuries to find even a Notker, a Gui d'Arezzo. To-day the man who desires to comprehend first and make his noise afterward comes upon the idiotic mess of unexplained, unexplainable scale-playing. The days when a *consort* arranged itself while you waited your turn at the barber's appear purely legendary. Our ears are passive before the onslaught of gramophones and pianolas. By persuading ourselves that we do not hear two-thirds of their abominable grind, we persuade ourselves that we take pleasure in the remainder of what they narrate. We feign a deafness which we have not, instead of developing our faculty for the finer perception of sound.

We pride ourselves on having exact transcripts of Arabic and Japanese and Zulu and Malay music; we take a sentimental pleasure in being reminded (in spite of the drone and wheeze, in spite of shriek and squeak), that we once heard the voice of Chaliapine. And as for the structure of music! . . .

We turn to the printed page; the eye is confused by the multitude of ornamental notes and trappings; lost in the maze; each note is written as importantly as any other. And "Modern" music is so much a fuzz, a thing of blobs and of splotches—sometimes beautiful, and probably the best of it is more beautiful to those who know exactly what fixed lines it avoids.

But the structure of music? . . . "Technicalities" . . . "Artists don't enjoy their art as much as people

who just enjoy it without trying to understand." That last quotation is one of the prize pieces of buncombe that the last generation indulged in. There is no comparison between the artist's enjoyment and the enjoyment of the layman. Only the artist can know this, for he is an artist in his own art and layman in all the rest, thus he can get some sense of proportion. He knows the difference between enthusiasm with vague half-comprehension, and enthusiasm plus an exact understanding. If the expert rejects 95 per cent of all examples of an art presented to him, he has more pleasure in the remainder than the layman can get from the lot with vague and omnivorous liking.

What we know of any art is mostly what some master has taught us. We may not know him in the flesh, but the masterwork, and only the masterwork, discontents us with mediocrity, or rather, it clarifies our discontentment; we may have suspected that something was wrong, been uninterested, worried, found the thing dull; the masterwork diagnoses it.

Dolmetsch has also made a fine diagnosis. He has incidentally thrown a side-light on metric,[1] he has said suggestive things about *silence d'articulation,* about the freedoms of the old music. When I say suggestive, I do not mean that we are to get a jargon out of these things, to use in artistic controversy; but there is enough in them to prevent fools from interfering with, or carping at, rhythms achieved by the artist in his own way. Art is a departure from fixed positions; felicitous departure from a norm. It is a fight against mechanics. In music the trouble may well have begun with an attempt to write music for the insensitive and the blockhead.

[1] Vide note on Vers Libre and Dolmetsch.

If we are to regain a thematic sense, or a sense of thematic invention or of structure, if we are to have new music, or to have the old music beautifully played; if we are to have a clearer comprehension of what we do hear, we may owe a good deal to Mr. Dolmetsch.

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